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SOPHOCLES

II

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WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
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IN TWO VOLUMES

II

AJAX
ELECTRA TRACHINIAE
PHILOCTETES

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AJAX

ARGUMENT

THE *arms of Achilles, claimed by Ajax as the bravest warrior in the host, were through intrigue given to Odysseus, and Ajax vows vengeance both on the winner and on the awarders of the prize. But Athena, his patron goddess, whom his arrogance has estranged, sends him a delusion so that he mistakes for his foes the sheep and cattle of the Greeks. Athena, when the play opens, is discovered conversing with Odysseus outside the tent of Ajax; she will show him his mad foe mauling the beasts within. The mad fit passes and Ajax bewails his insensate folly and declares that death alone can wipe out the shame. His wife Tecmessa and the Chorus try to dissuade him, but he will not be comforted and calls for his son Eurysaces. The child is brought, and after leaving his last injunctions for his brother Teucer, Ajax takes a tender farewell. He then fetches his sword from the tent and goes forth declaring that he will purge himself of his stains and bury his sword. Presently a Messenger from the camp announces that Teucer has returned from his foray and has learnt from Calchas, the seer, that if only Ajax can be kept within the camp for that day all may yet be well. The Chorus and Tecmessa set forth in quest of Ajax, and Tecmessa discovers him lying transfixed by his sword. Teucer finds the mourners gathered round the corpse and is preparing to bury him, when Menelaus hurries up to forbid the burial. After an angry wrangle with Teucer, Menelaus departs, but is succeeded by Agamemnon, who enforces his brother's veto and is hardly persuaded by Odysseus to relent. Ajax is carried by his Salaminians to his grave, a grave (so they prophesy) that shall be famous for all time.*

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ΑΙΑΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ ΣΑΛΑΜΙΝΙΩΝ ΝΑΥΤΩΝ
ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ATHENA.

ODYSSEUS, *King of Ithaca.*

AJAX, *son of Telamon and Euboea, leader of the men of Salamis.*

TECMESSA, *his captive wife, daughter of Teleutas, King of Phrygia.*

EURYSACES, *their infant son.*

TEUCER, *son of Telamon by Hesione.*

MENELAUS, *King of Sparta.*

AGAMEMNON, *his brother, captain of the host.*

MESSENGER, *one of Ajax's men.*

CHORUS, *Mariners of Salamis.*

SCENE: The shore on the Northern coast of the Troad before the tent of Ajax. TIME: Early morning.

ΑΙΑΣ

ΑΘΗΝΑ

Ἀεὶ μέν, ὦ παῖ Λαρτίου, δέδορκά σε
πεῖράν τιν' ἐχθρῶν ἁρπάσαι θηρώμενον·
καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ σκηναῖς σε ναυτικαῖς ὁρῶ
Αἴαντος, ἔνθα τάξιν ἐσχάτην ἔχει,
πάλαι κυνηγετοῦντα καὶ μετρούμενον
ἴχνη τὰ κείνου νεοχάραχθ', ὅπως ἴδῃς
εἴτ' ἔνδον εἴτ' οὐκ ἔνδον. εὖ δέ σ' ἐκφέρει
κυνὸς Λακαίνης ὥς τις εὔρινος βάσις.
ἔνδον γὰρ ἁνὴρ ἄρτι τυγχάνει, κάρα
στάζων ἱδρῶτι καὶ χέρας ξιφοκτόνους. 10
καί σ' οὐδὲν εἴσω τῆσδε παπταίνειν πύλης
ἔτ' ἔργον ἐστίν, ἐννέπειν δ' ὅτου χάριν
σπουδὴν ἔθου τήνδ', ὡς παρ' εἰδυίας μάθῃς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὦ φθέγμ' Ἀθάνας, φιλτάτης ἐμοὶ θεῶν,
ὡς εὐμαθές σου, κἂν ἄποπτος ᾖς ὅμως,
φώνημ' ἀκούω καὶ ξυναρπάζω φρενὶ
χαλκοστόμου κώδωνος ὡς Τυρσηνικῆς.
καὶ νῦν ἐπέγνως εὖ μ' ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ δυσμενεῖ
βάσιν κυκλοῦντ', Αἴαντι τῷ σακεσφόρῳ·

AJAX

Enter ODYSSEUS, *scanning recent footprints in the sand* ATHENA, *invisible to* ODYSSEUS, *is seen by the spectators above the stage in the air.*

ATHENA

Son of Laertes, ever on the prowl
To seize some coign of vantage 'gainst thy foes,
Now at the tent of Ajax by the ships,
Where he is posted on the flank, I see thee
Following the trail and scanning his fresh tracks,
To learn if Ajax be within or no.
Bravely thy long search brings thee to the goal,
Like a keen-scented hound of Spartan breed;
The man has even now returned, his brow
Bedewed with sweat and hands besmeared with gore
No further need to peer within these doors;
Say rather what the purpose of thy search
Thus keenly urged, and learn from one who knows.

ODYSSEUS

Voice of Athena, Goddess most by me
Beloved, how clearly, though I see thee not,
Those accents strike my ear and thrill my soul,
Like some Tyrrhenian trumpet, brazen-mouthed.
Yea, thou hast well divined why thus I cast
About in hot pursuance of a foe,
Ajax, the bearer of the seven-fold shield :

κεῖνον γάρ, οὐδέν' ἄλλον, ἰχνεύω πάλαι. 20
νυκτὸς γὰρ ἡμᾶς τῆσδε πρᾶγος ἄσκοπον
ἔχει περάνας, εἴπερ εἴργασται τάδε·
ἴσμεν γὰρ οὐδὲν τρανές, ἀλλ' ἀλώμεθα·
κἀγὼ 'θελοντὴς τῷδ' ὑπεζύγην πόνῳ.
ἐφθαρμένας γὰρ ἀρτίως εὑρίσκομεν
λείας ἁπάσας καὶ κατηναρισμένας
ἐκ χειρὸς αὐτοῖς ποιμνίων ἐπιστάταις.
τήνδ' οὖν ἐκείνῳ πᾶς τις αἰτίαν νέμει.
καί μοί τις ὀπτὴρ αὐτὸν εἰσιδὼν μόνον
πηδῶντα πεδία σὺν νεορράντῳ ξίφει 30
φράζει τε κἀδήλωσεν· εὐθέως δ' ἐγὼ
κατ' ἴχνος ᾄσσω, καὶ τὰ μὲν σημαίνομαι,
τὰ δ' ἐκπέπληγμαι κοὐκ ἔχω μαθεῖν ὅτου.
καιρὸν δ' ἐφήκεις· πάντα γὰρ τά τ' οὖν πάρος
τά τ' εἰσέπειτα σῇ κυβερνῶμαι χερί.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἔγνων, Ὀδυσσεῦ, καὶ πάλαι φύλαξ ἔβην
τῇ σῇ πρόθυμος εἰς ὁδὸν κυναγίᾳ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦ καί, φίλη δέσποινα, πρὸς καιρὸν πονῶ;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ὡς ἔστιν ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε τἄργα ταῦτά σοι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πρὸς τί δυσλόγιστον ὧδ' ᾖξεν χέρα; 40

ΑΘΗΝΑ

χόλῳ βαρυνθεὶς τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὅπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί δῆτα ποίμναις τήνδ' ἐπεμπίπτει βάσιν;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

δοκῶν ἐν ὑμῖν χεῖρα χραίνεσθαι φόνῳ.

Him and none other I have tracked full long.
Last night a monstrous thing he wrought on us,
If it be he in sooth—'tis all surmise.
So for the hard task of discovery
I volunteered. This very morn we found
Our herds, the spoil of war, all hacked and hewn,
Slain with their herdsmen by some human hand.
On him with one consent all lay the guilt:
And by a scout who marked him o'er the plain,
In mad career, alone, with reeking sword,
I duly was informed, and instantly
I sped upon the spoor, and now the tracks
I recognise, and now am all at fault,
Without a clue to tell me whose they are.
Most welcome then thy advent; thine the hand
That ever guided and shall guide my path.

ATHENA

I know, Odysseus, and set forth betimes
To meet thee and abet thee in this chase.

ODYSSEUS

Tell me, dear mistress, will my quest succeed?

ATHENA

Know that the guilty man is he thou seek'st.

ODYSSEUS

What moved him to this rash, insensate deed?

ATHENA

Resentment touching dead Achilles' arms.

ODYSSEUS

Why did he fall upon the innocent sheep?

ATHENA

He thought his hands were gory with *your* blood.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦ καὶ τὸ βούλευμ' ὡς ἐπ' Ἀργείοις τόδ' ἦν;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

κἂν ἐξεπράξατ', εἰ κατημέλησ' ἐγώ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ποίαισι τόλμαις ταῖσδε καὶ φρενῶν θράσει;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

νύκτωρ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς δόλιος ὁρμᾶται μόνος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦ καὶ παρέστη κἀπὶ τέρμ' ἀφίκετο;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

καὶ δὴ 'πὶ δισσαῖς ἦν στρατηγίσιν πύλαις.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πῶς ἐπέσχε χεῖρα μαιμῶσαν φόνου; 50

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἐγώ σφ' ἀπείργω, δυσφόρους ἐπ' ὄμμασι
γνώμας βαλοῦσα τῆς ἀνηκέστου χαρᾶς,
καὶ πρός τε ποίμνας ἐκτρέπω σύμμικτά τε
λείας ἄδαστα βουκόλων φρουρήματα·
ἔνθ' εἰσπεσὼν ἔκειρε πολύκερων φόνον
κύκλῳ ῥαχίζων· κἀδόκει μὲν ἔσθ' ὅτε
δισσοὺς Ἀτρείδας αὐτόχειρ κτείνειν ἔχων,
ὅτ' ἄλλοτ' ἄλλον ἐμπίτνων στρατηλατῶν.
ἐγὼ δὲ φοιτῶντ' ἄνδρα μανιάσιν νόσοις
ὤτρυνον, εἰσέβαλλον εἰς ἕρκη κακά. 60
κἄπειτ' ἐπειδὴ τοῦδ' ἐλώφησεν πόνου,
τοὺς ζῶντας αὖ δεσμοῖσι συνδήσας βοῶν
ποίμνας τε πάσας εἰς δόμους κομίζεται,
ὡς ἄνδρας, οὐχ ὡς εὔκερων ἄγραν ἔχων,
καὶ νῦν κατ' οἴκους συνδέτους αἰκίζεται.
δείξω δὲ καὶ σοὶ τήνδε περιφανῆ νόσον,
ὡς πᾶσιν Ἀργείοισιν εἰσιδὼν θροῇς.

ODYSSEUS

What, was this onslaught planned against the Greeks?

ATHENA

Aye, and it had succeeded, but for me.

ODYSSEUS

How could he venture such fool-hardiness?

ATHENA

He schemed a night attack, by stealth, alone.

ODYSSEUS

And did he reach us and arrive his goal?

ATHENA

At the tent door of the two chiefs he stood.

ODYSSEUS

What then arrested him athirst for blood?

ATHENA

I, by the strong delusion that I sent,
A vision of the havoc he should make.
I turned his wrath aside upon the flocks
And the promiscuous cattle in the charge
Of drovers, booty not apportioned yet.
On them he fell and hewing right and left
Dealt death among the hornèd herd; and now
It was the two Atridae whom he slew,
And now a third, and now some other chief.
'Twas I that goaded him while thus distraught,
And thrust him deeper in the coils of fate.
Then pausing in this toil he turned to bind
The oxen left alive with all the sheep,
And drave them home, as if his spoil were men,
And not poor innocent beasts with hoofs and horns,
And now is mangling them fast bound within.
Thou too this raving madness shalt behold,
That thou mayst bruit the sight to all the Greeks.

θαρσῶν δὲ μίμνε μηδὲ συμφορὰν δέχου
τὸν ἄνδρ'· ἐγὼ γὰρ ὀμμάτων ἀποστρόφους
αὐγὰς ἀπείρξω σὴν πρόσοψιν εἰσιδεῖν.
οὗτος, σὲ τὸν τὰς αἰχμαλωτίδας χέρας
δεσμοῖς ἀπευθύνοντα προσμολεῖν καλῶ·
Αἴαντα φωνῶ· στεῖχε δωμάτων πάρος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί δρᾷς, Ἀθάνα; μηδαμῶς σφ' ἔξω κάλει.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οὐ σῖγ' ἀνέξει μηδὲ δειλίαν ἀρεῖ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

μὴ πρὸς θεῶν, ἀλλ' ἔνδον ἀρκείτω μένων.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τί μὴ γένηται; πρόσθεν οὐκ ἀνὴρ ὅδ' ἦν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐχθρός γε τῷδε τἀνδρὶ καὶ τανῦν ἔτι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

οὔκουν γέλως ἥδιστος εἰς ἐχθροὺς γελᾶν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐμοὶ μὲν ἀρκεῖ τοῦτον ἐν δόμοις μένειν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

μεμηνότ' ἄνδρα περιφανῶς ὀκνεῖς ἰδεῖν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

φρονοῦντα γάρ νιν οὐκ ἂν ἐξέστην ὄκνῳ.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ νῦν σε μὴ παρόντ' ἴδῃ πέλας.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

πῶς, εἴπερ ὀφθαλμοῖς γε τοῖς αὐτοῖς ὁρᾷ;

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἐγὼ σκοτώσω βλέφαρα καὶ δεδορκότα.

Be of good heart and stand thy ground; no harm
Shall come from him, for I will turn aside
His vision, lest he should behold thy face.

(*To* AJAX *within the tent.*)

Ho, thou that bind'st with cords behind their backs
Thy captives' hands, ho Ajax, hear'st thou not?
I summon thee to come before the tent.

ODYSSEUS

What dost thou, Goddess? Nowise call him forth.

ATHENA

Bridle thy tongue; earn not a coward's name.

ODYSSEUS

Nay, nay; suffice it that he bide within.

ATHENA

What fear'st thou? Is he not, as erst, a man?

ODYSSEUS

Yea, and to me sworn foeman, and is still.

ATHENA

What mockery sweeter than to mock at foes?

ODYSSEUS

Enough for me to hear of him within.

ATHENA

What, fear to see a madman face to face?

ODYSSEUS

I had not quailed to face him, were he sane.

ATHENA

Insane, he shall not see thee now, though near.

ODYSSEUS

If he has eyes as erst, how can that be?

ATHENA

I will obscure his vision, howe'er clear.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
γένοιτο μένταν πᾶν θεοῦ τεχνωμένου.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
σίγα νυν ἑστὼς καὶ μέν' ὡς κυρεῖς ἔχων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
μένοιμ' ἄν· ἤθελον δ' ἂν ἐκτὸς ὢν τυχεῖν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ὦ οὗτος, Αἴας, δεύτερόν σε προσκαλῶ.
τί βαιὸν οὕτως ἐντρέπει τῆς συμμάχου; 90

ΑΙΑΣ
ὦ χαῖρ' Ἀθάνα, χαῖρε Διογενὲς τέκνον,
ὡς εὖ παρέστης· καί σε παγχρύσοις ἐγὼ
στέψω λαφύροις τῆσδε τῆς ἄγρας χάριν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
καλῶς ἔλεξας· ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνό μοι φράσον,
ἔβαψας ἔγχος εὖ πρὸς Ἀργείων στρατῷ;

ΑΙΑΣ
κόμπος πάρεστι κοὐκ ἀπαρνοῦμαι τὸ μή.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
ἦ καὶ πρὸς Ἀτρείδαισιν ᾔχμασας χέρα;

ΑΙΑΣ
ὥστ' οὔποτ' Αἴανθ' οἵδ' ἀτιμάσουσ' ἔτι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ
τεθνᾶσιν ἄνδρες, ὡς τὸ σὸν ξυνῆκ' ἐγώ.

ΑΙΑΣ
θανόντες ἤδη τἄμ' ἀφαιρείσθων ὅπλα. 100

ΑΘΗΝΑ
εἶεν, τί γὰρ δὴ παῖς ὁ τοῦ Λαερτίου,
ποῦ σοι τύχης ἕστηκεν; ἦ πέφευγέ σε;

ΑΙΑΣ
ἦ τοὐπίτριπτον κίναδος ἐξήρου μ' ὅπου;

ODYSSEUS

Well, when a god works, all is possible.

ATHENA

Peace! stand thy ground and budge not from the spot.

ODYSSEUS

So will I—yet had liefer been far hence.

ATHENA (*to* AJAX)

Ho, Ajax! once again I summon thee.
Say, why this scant regard for thine ally?

Enter AJAX.

AJAX

Hail O Athena, Zeus-born maiden, hail!
Thine aid how opportune! for this I'll crown
Thy shrine with votive spoils of purest gold.

ATHENA

Fair words; but tell me, hast thou well imbrued
Thy sword with carnage of the Argive host?

AJAX

A glorious deed that I will not disclaim.

ATHENA

Haply thou has assailed the Atridae too?

AJAX

So that they ne'er will outrage Ajax more.

ATHENA

If I interpret rightly, they are dead.

AJAX

Both dead; now let them cheat me of my arms!

ATHENA

Good; and how fares it with Laertes' son?
How hast thou left him? or has he escaped?

AJAX

He! That sly fox—wouldst know what's come of him?

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ἔγωγ'· Ὀδυσσέα τὸν σὸν ἐνστάτην λέγω.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἥδιστος, ὦ δέσποινα, δεσμώτης ἔσω
θακεῖ· θανεῖν γὰρ αὐτὸν οὔ τί πω θέλω.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

πρὶν ἂν τί δράσῃς ἢ τί κερδάνῃς πλέον;

ΑΙΑΣ

πρὶν ἂν δεθεὶς πρὸς κίον' ἑρκείου στέγης

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τί δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ἐργάσει κακόν;

ΑΙΑΣ

μάστιγι πρῶτον νῶτα φοινιχθεὶς θάνῃ. 110

ΑΘΗΝΑ

μὴ δῆτα τὸν δύστηνον ὧδέ γ' αἰκίσῃ.

ΑΙΑΣ

χαίρειν, Ἀθάνα, τἄλλ' ἐγώ σ' ἐφίεμαι·
κεῖνος δὲ τίσει τήνδε κοὐκ ἄλλην δίκην.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

σὺ δ' οὖν, ἐπειδὴ τέρψις ἥδε σοι τὸ δρᾶν,
χρῶ χειρί, φείδου μηδὲν ὧνπερ ἐννοεῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

χωρῶ πρὸς ἔργον· σοὶ δὲ τοῦτ' ἐφίεμαι,
τοιάνδ' ἀεί μοι σύμμαχον παρεστάναι.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

ὁρᾷς, Ὀδυσσεῦ, τὴν θεῶν ἰσχὺν ὅση;
τούτου τίς ἄν σοι τἀνδρὸς ἢ προνούστερος
ἢ δρᾶν ἀμείνων ηὑρέθη τὰ καίρια; 120

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὐδέν' οἶδ'· ἐποικτίρω δέ νιν
δύστηνον ἔμπας, καίπερ ὄντα δυσμενῆ,

ATHENA

Of him—Odysseus, thy antagonist.

AJAX

A welcome guest he sits within, fast bound.
I have no mind that he should die outright.

ATHENA

What would'st thou first? what further profit win?

AJAX

I'll bind him to a pillar of my tent.

ATHENA

What vengeance wilt thou wreak on the poor wretch?

AJAX

Flay with my scourge his back before he die.

ATHENA

O torture not the wretch so savagely.

AJAX

In all but this, Athena, have thy will;
This and none else, must be his punishment.

ATHENA

Well, since it is thy pleasure, be it so:
Lay on, abate no jot of thine intent.

AJAX

I will to work then, and I look to thee
To be my true ally all times, as now.

[*Exit* AJAX.

ATHENA

Odysseus, see how great the might of gods.
Couldst thou have found a man more circumspect,
Or one more prompt for all emergencies?

ODYSSEUS

I know none such, and though he be my foe,
I still must pity him in his distress.

ὁθούνεκ' ἄτῃ συγκατέζευκται κακῇ,
οὐδὲν τὸ τούτου μᾶλλον ἢ τοὐμὸν σκοπῶν·
ὁρῶ γὰρ ἡμᾶς οὐδὲν ὄντας ἄλλο πλὴν
εἴδωλ' ὅσοιπερ ζῶμεν ἢ κούφην σκιάν.

ΑΘΗΝΑ

τοιαῦτα τοίνυν εἰσορῶν ὑπέρκοπον
μηδέν ποτ' εἴπῃς αὐτὸς εἰς θεοὺς ἔπος,
μηδ' ὄγκον ἄρῃ μηδέν', εἴ τινος πλέον
ἢ χειρὶ βρίθεις ἢ μακροῦ πλούτου βάθει. 130
ὡς ἡμέρα κλίνει τε κἀνάγει πάλιν
ἅπαντα τἀνθρώπεια· τοὺς δὲ σώφρονας
θεοὶ φιλοῦσι καὶ στυγοῦσι τοὺς κακούς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Τελαμώνιε παῖ, τῆς ἀμφιρύτου
Σαλαμῖνος ἔχων βάθρον ἀγχιάλου,
σὲ μὲν εὖ πράσσοντ' ἐπιχαίρω·
σὲ δ' ὅταν πληγὴ Διὸς ἢ ζαμενὴς
λόγος ἐκ Δαναῶν κακόθρους ἐπιβῇ,
μέγαν ὄκνον ἔχω καὶ πεφόβημαι
πτηνῆς ὡς ὄμμα πελείας. 140
ὡς καὶ τῆς νῦν φθιμένης νυκτὸς
μεγάλοι θόρυβοι κατέχουσ' ἡμᾶς
ἐπὶ δυσκλείᾳ, σὲ τὸν ἱππομανῆ
λειμῶν' ἐπιβάντ' ὀλέσαι Δαναῶν
βοτὰ καὶ λείαν,
ἥπερ δορίληπτος ἔτ' ἦν λοιπή,
κτείνοντ' αἴθωνι σιδήρῳ.
τοιούσδε λόγους ψιθύρους πλάσσων
εἰς ὦτα φέρει πᾶσιν Ὀδυσσεύς,

Bound, hand and foot, to fatal destiny;
And therein mind my case no less than his.
Alas! we living mortals, what are we
But phantoms all or unsubstantial shades?

ATHENA

Warned by these sights, Odysseus, see that thou
Utter no boastful word against the gods,
Nor swell with pride if haply might of arm
Exalt thee o'er thy fellows, or vast wealth.
A day can prostrate and a day upraise
All that is mortal; but the gods approve
Sobriety and frowardness abhor.

[*Exeunt* ATHENA *and* ODYSSEUS. *Enter* CHORUS.

CHORUS

Son of Telamon, thou whose isle,
Sea-girt Salamis, doth smile
O'er the surge, thy joys I share
When thy fortunes promise fair;
But if stroke of Zeus assail,
Or the slanderous tongues prevail
Of the Danaï, to blast
Thy repute, I cower aghast,
Like a dove with quivering eye.
For of yesternight there fly
Bitter plaints and loud-voiced blame
Crowding on us to our shame—
How thou speddest o'er the meads
Rich in troops of unbacked steeds,
And with flashing sword didst slay
All the yet unparted prey
Of the Greeks, in foray ta'en,
Spoiling all their hard earned gain.
Such the scandal, as we hear,
Odysseus breathes in every ear;

καὶ σφόδρα πείθει· περὶ γὰρ σοῦ νῦν 150
εὔπειστα λέγει, καὶ πᾶς ὁ κλύων
τοῦ λέξαντος χαίρει μᾶλλον
τοῖς σοῖς ἄχεσιν καθυβρίζων.
τῶν γὰρ μεγάλων ψυχῶν ἱεὶς
οὐκ ἂν ἁμάρτοις· κατὰ δ' ἄν τις ἐμοῦ
τοιαῦτα λέγων οὐκ ἂν πείθοι·
πρὸς γὰρ τὸν ἔχονθ' ὁ φθόνος ἕρπει.
καίτοι σμικροὶ μεγάλων χωρὶς
σφαλερὸν πύργου ῥῦμα πέλονται·
μετὰ γὰρ μεγάλων βαιὸς ἄριστ' ἂν 160
καὶ μέγας ὀρθοῖθ' ὑπὸ μικροτέρων.
ἀλλ' οὐ δυνατὸν τοὺς ἀνοήτους
τούτων γνώμας προδιδάσκειν.
ὑπὸ τοιούτων ἀνδρῶν θορυβεῖ
χἠμεῖς οὐδὲν σθένομεν πρὸς ταῦτ'
ἀπαλέξασθαι σοῦ χωρίς, ἄναξ.
ἀλλ' ὅτε γὰρ δὴ τὸ σὸν ὄμμ' ἀπέδραν,
παταγοῦσιν ἅπερ πτηνῶν ἀγέλαι·
μέγαν αἰγυπιὸν δ'[1] ὑποδείσαντες
τάχ' ἂν ἐξαίφνης, εἰ σὺ φανείης, 170
σιγῇ πτήξειαν ἄφωνοι.

ἦ ῥά σε Ταυροπόλα Διὸς Ἄρτεμις— στρ.
ὦ μεγάλα φάτις, ὦ
μᾶτερ αἰσχύνας ἐμᾶς—
ὥρμασε πανδάμους ἐπὶ βοῦς ἀγελαίας,
ἦ πού τινος νίκας ἀκάρπωτον χάριν,
ἤ ῥα κλυτῶν ἐνάρων
ψευσθεῖσ', ἀδώροις,[2] εἴτ' ἐλαφαβολίας;

[1] Dawes adds δ'.
[2] ψευσθεῖσα δώροις MSS., Stephanus corr.

And he wins belief, for now
Thou dost seem thy guilt to avow,
And the rumour spreads and swells.
Even more than he who tells,
Every hearer takes delight
In thy woes, for envious spite.
So it falls; the noblest heart
Is a target for each dart;
Aimed at me such shafts would fail:
Envy doth the great assail.
Yet without the great the small
Ill could guard the city wall;
Leagued together small and great
Best defend the common state.
Fools this precept will not heed,
And these men are fools indeed
Who against thee rail; and we
Can do nothing without thee,
To confound their charge, O King.
Like to birds they flap the wing,
And chatter, when they 'scape thine eye;
But if hovering in the sky
The great vulture should appear,
Mute they cower in sudden fear.

Was it the Tauric Artemis, Jove's daughter, (*Str.*)
(O dread report, begetter of my shame!)
Drave thee the flocks, our common stock, to slaughter?
Didst thou in victory rob her of her claim
To tithe of spoil, her part,
When to thy bow there fell some noble hart?

ἢ χαλκοθώραξ μή τιν'[1] Ἐνυάλιος
μομφὰν ἔχων ξυνοῦ δορὸς ἐννυχίοις 180
μαχαναῖς ἐτίσατο λώβαν;

ἀντ.

οὔ ποτε γὰρ φρενόθεν γ' ἐπ' ἀριστερά,
παῖ Τελαμῶνος, ἔβας
τόσσον, ἐν ποίμναις πίτνων·
ἥκοι γὰρ ἂν θεία νόσος· ἀλλ' ἀπερύκοι
καὶ Ζεὺς κακὰν καὶ Φοῖβος Ἀργείων φάτιν.
εἰ δ' ὑποβαλλόμενοι
κλέπτουσι μύθους οἱ μεγάλοι βασιλῆς
ἢ τᾶς ἀσώτου Σισυφιδᾶν γενεᾶς, 190
μὴ μή, ἄναξ, ἔθ' ὧδ' ἐφάλοις κλισίαις
ὄμμ' ἔχων κακὰν φάτιν ἄρῃ.

ἀλλ' ἄνα ἐξ ἑδράνων, ὅπου μακραίωνι
στηρίζει ποτὲ τᾷδ' ἀγωνίῳ σχολᾷ
ἄταν οὐρανίαν φλέγων.
ἐχθρῶν δ' ὕβρις ὧδ' ἀτάρβητα
ὁρμᾶται ἐν εὐανέμοις βάσσαις,
πάντων καγχαζόντων
γλώσσαις βαρυάλγητα·
ἐμοὶ δ' ἄχος ἕστακεν. 200

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ναὸς ἀρωγοὶ τῆς Αἴαντος,
γενεᾶς χθονίων ἀπ' Ἐρεχθειδῶν,
ἔχομεν στοναχὰς οἱ κηδόμενοι
τοῦ Τελαμῶνος τηλόθεν οἴκου.
νῦν γὰρ ὁ δεινὸς μέγας ὠμοκρατὴς
Αἴας θολερῷ
κεῖται χειμῶνι νοσήσας.

[1] ἤ τιν' MSS., Musgrave corr.

Or did the mail-clad God of War resent
Thy negligence thank-offering to pay?
By him at night was the delusion sent
That led astray?

(*Ant.*)

Ne'er wouldst thou, Ajax, of thine own intent
Have wrought this havoc and the cattle slain.
Such frenzy comes from Heaven in punishment.
(Zeus and Apollo prove the rumour vain!)
And if the great chiefs falsely charge thee, King,
Spreading foul scandal, or the accursed race
Of Sisyphus,[1] let not this ill fame cling
To us thy friends; no longer hide thy face,
Quit, we implore,
Thy tent upon the shore.

Rouse thee, my King, where'er thou sittest brooding;
Too long thou mak'st the stour of battle cease,
While in the camp red ruin flames to heaven,
And, like the west wind soughing in the trees,
Unchecked the mockery goes
Of thy o'erweening foes.
My woe no respite knows!

Enter TECMESSA *from the tent.*

TECMESSA

Crew of Ajax, men who trace
Back to Erechtheus your famed race,
Woe is ours who muse upon
The far-off house of Telamon;
For our lord of dreaded might
Stricken lies in desperate plight,
And his soul is dark as night.

[1] Odysseus, reputed son of Sisyphus, not Laertes.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἐνήλλακται τῆς ἡμερίας
νὺξ ἥδε βάρος;
παῖ τοῦ Φρυγίου Τελεύταντος, 210
λέγ', ἐπεὶ σὲ λέχος δουριάλωτον
στέρξας ἀνέχει θούριος Αἴας·
ὥστ' οὐκ ἂν ἄϊδρις ὑπείποις.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

πῶς δῆτα λέγω λόγον ἄρρητον;
θανάτῳ γὰρ ἴσον βάρος ἐκπεύσει.
μανίᾳ γὰρ ἁλοὺς ἡμὶν ὁ κλεινὸς
νύκτερος Αἴας ἀπελωβήθη.
τοιαῦτ' ἂν ἴδοις σκηνῆς ἔνδον
χειροδάϊκτα σφάγι' αἱμοβαφῆ,
κείνου χρηστήρια τἀνδρός. 220

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἵαν ἐδήλωσας ἀνέρος[1] αἴθονος στρ.
ἀγγελίαν ἄτλατον οὐδὲ φευκτάν,
τῶν μεγάλων Δαναῶν ὕπο κληζομέναν,
τὰν ὁ μέγας μῦθος ἀέξει.
οἴμοι φοβοῦμαι τὸ προσέρπον· περίφαντος ἀνὴρ
θανεῖται, παραπλάκτῳ χερὶ συγκατακτὰς
κελαινοῖς ξίφεσιν βοτὰ καὶ βοτῆρας ἱππονώμας. 230

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὤμοι· κεῖθεν κεῖθεν ἄρ' ἡμῖν
δεσμῶτιν ἄγων ἤλυθε ποίμνην·
ὧν τὴν μὲν ἔσω σφάζ' ἐπὶ γαίας,
τὰ δὲ πλευροκοπῶν δίχ' ἀνερρήγνυ.
δύο δ' ἀργίποδας κριοὺς ἀνελὼν
τοῦ μὲν κεφαλὴν καὶ γλῶσσαν ἄκραν

[1] MSS. ἀνδρὸς.

CHORUS

What the change so grievous, say,
Of the morn from yesterday?
Daughter of Teleutas, tell;
Stalwart Ajax loves thee well,
Thee his spear-won bride; 'tis thine
What befalls him to divine.

TECMESSA

Ah, how tell a tale so drear?
Sad as death what thou shalt hear
Of great Ajax, undone quite,
Smit with madness, in the night.
Look within and see the floor
Reeking with his victims' gore;
Slain by his own hand there lies
His ungodly sacrifice.

CHORUS

O fatal tidings of the hot-brained chief; (*Str.*)
Intolerable, yet without relief!
What flagrant charge amid the Greek host goes
That spread by rumour grows?
Ah me, doom stalks amain!
And if with his dark blade the man hath slain
The herds and mounted herdsmen, sure he dies,
A malefactor shamed before all eyes.

TECMESSA

Ah me, 'twas thence I saw him come
Driving his captive cattle home.
Of some he gashed the throats amain,
There where they stood upon the ground;
And some were ripped and rent in twain.
Then two white-footed rams he found;

ῥιπτεῖ θερίσας, τὸν δ' ὀρθὸν ἄνω
κίονι δήσας 24
μέγαν ἱπποδέτην ῥυτῆρα λαβὼν
παίει λιγυρᾷ μάστιγι διπλῇ,
κακὰ δεννάζων ῥήμαθ', ἃ δαίμων
κοὐδεὶς ἀνδρῶν ἐδίδαξεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὥρα τιν' ἤδη τοι κρᾶτα καλύμμασι *ἀντ.*
κρυψάμενον ποδοῖν κλοπὰν ἀρέσθαι
ἢ θοὸν εἰρεσίας ζυγὸν ἑζόμενον
ποντοπόρῳ ναΐ μεθεῖναι. 25
τοίας ἐρέσσουσιν ἀπειλὰς δικρατεῖς Ἀτρεῖδαι
καθ' ἡμῶν· πεφόβημαι λιθόλευστον Ἄρη
ξυναλγεῖν μετὰ τοῦδε τυπείς, τὸν αἶσ'
ἄπλατος ἴσχει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὐκέτι· λαμπρᾶς γὰρ ἄτερ στεροπῆς
ᾄξας ὀξὺς νότος ὣς λήγει,
καὶ νῦν φρόνιμος νέον ἄλγος ἔχει·
τὸ γὰρ ἐσλεύσσειν οἰκεῖα πάθη, 26
μηδενὸς ἄλλου παραπράξαντος,
μεγάλας ὀδύνας ὑποτείνει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ πέπαυται, κάρτ' ἂν εὐτυχεῖν δοκῶ·
φρούδου γὰρ ἤδη τοῦ κακοῦ μείων λόγος.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

πότερα δ' ἄν, εἰ νέμοι τις αἵρεσιν, λάβοις,
φίλους ἀνιῶν αὐτὸς ἡδονὰς ἔχειν,
ἢ κοινὸς ἐν κοινοῖσι λυπεῖσθαι ξυνών;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τό τοι διπλάζον, ὦ γύναι, μεῖζον κακόν,

Of one, beheaded first, the tongue
He snipped, then far the carcase flung.
The other to a pillar lashed
Erect, with doubled rein, he thrashed,
And as he plied the whistling thong
He uttered imprecations strong,
Dread words a god, no man, had taught.

CHORUS

'Tis time to veil the head and steal away (*Ant.*)
On foot, or straight embarking ply the oar,
And let the good ship bear us from the bay;
Such bitter threats the Atridae on us pour.
Me too, if I be by him, they will stone;
He stands alone,
Fate marks him for her own.

TECMESSA

No more; for like the southern blast
When lightnings flash, his rage is past.
But, now he is himself again,
Reviving memory brings new pain.
What keener anguish than to know
Thyself sole cause of self-wrought woe?

CHORUS

Nay, if he have surcease, good hope is mine
All may be well, for men are less concerned
With evil doing when the trouble's past.

TECMESSA

Come tell me, which wouldst choose, if choice were free,
To vex thy friends while thou thyself wert glad,
Or share the pain, grieving with them that grieve?

CHORUS

The twofold sorrow, lady, is the worse.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἡμεῖς ἄρ' οὐ νοσοῦντες ἀτώμεσθα νῦν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς τοῦτ' ἔλεξας; οὐ κάτοιδ' ὅπως λέγεις. 27

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀνὴρ ἐκεῖνος, ἡνίκ' ἦν ἐν τῇ νόσῳ,
αὐτὸς μὲν ἥδεθ' οἷσιν εἴχετ' ἐν κακοῖς,
ἡμᾶς δὲ τοὺς φρονοῦντας ἠνία ξυνών·
νῦν δ' ὡς ἔληξε κἀνέπνευσε τῆς νόσου,
κεῖνός τε λύπῃ πᾶς ἐλήλαται κακῇ
ἡμεῖς θ' ὁμοίως οὐδὲν ἧσσον ἢ πάρος.
ἆρ' ἔστι ταῦτα δὶς τόσ' ἐξ ἁπλῶν κακά;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξύμφημι δή σοι καὶ δέδοικα μὴ 'κ θεοῦ
πληγή τις ἥκῃ.[1] πῶς γάρ, εἰ πεπαυμένος
μηδέν τι μᾶλλον ἢ νοσῶν εὐφραίνεται; 28

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὡς ὧδ' ἐχόντων τῶνδ' ἐπίστασθαί σε χρή.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς γάρ ποτ' ἀρχὴ τοῦ κακοῦ προσέπτατο;
δήλωσον ἡμῖν τοῖς ξυναλγοῦσιν τύχας.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἅπαν μαθήσει τοὔργον ὡς κοινωνὸς ὤν.
κεῖνος γὰρ ἄκρας νυκτός, ἡνίχ' ἕσπεροι
λαμπτῆρες οὐκέτ' ᾖθον, ἄμφηκες λαβὼν
ἐμαίετ' ἔγχος ἐξόδους ἕρπειν κενάς.
κἀγὼ 'πιπλήσσω καὶ λέγω· τί χρῆμα δρᾷς,
Αἴας; τί τήνδ' ἄκλητος οὔθ' ὑπ' ἀγγέλων
κληθεὶς ἀφορμᾷς πεῖραν οὔτε τοῦ κλύων 29
σάλπιγγος; ἀλλὰ νῦν γε πᾶς εὕδει στρατός.
ὁ δ' εἶπε πρός με βαί', ἀεὶ δ' ὑμνούμενα·

[1] ἥκοι MSS., Suidas corr.

TECMESSA

Then are we losers now our plague is past.

CHORUS

What meanest thou ? it passes my poor wit.

TECMESSA

Yon man, while stricken, had himself delight
In his sick fancies, though his presence grieved
Us who were sane ; but now that he is whole,
Eased of his frenzy, he is racked with grief,
And we are no less troubled than before.
Are there not here two ills in place of one ?

CHORUS

'Tis even so, and much I fear it prove
A stroke from heaven, if indeed, now cured,
He is no gladder than he was when sick.

TECMESSA

His case is as thou sayest, rest assured.

CHORUS

But tell us how the plague first struck him down.
We share thy sorrow and would know it all.

TECMESSA

Hear then the story of our common woe.
At dead of night when all the lamps were out,
He took his two-edged sword, as if intent
On some wild expedition. So I chid him,
Saying, " What dost thou, Ajax, why go forth ?
No summons, messenger or trumpet blast,
Hath called thee ; nay, by now the whole host sleeps."
He answered lightly with an ancient saw,

γύναι, γυναιξὶ κόσμον ἡ σιγὴ φέρει.
κἀγὼ μαθοῦσ' ἔληξ', ὁ δ' ἐσσύθη μόνος.
καὶ τὰς ἐκεῖ μὲν οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν πάθας·
ἔσω δ' ἐσῆλθε συνδέτους ἄγων ὁμοῦ
ταύρους, κύνας βοτῆρας, εὔερόν[1] τ' ἄγραν.
καὶ τοὺς μὲν ηὐχένιζε, τοὺς δ' ἄνω τρέπων
ἔσφαζε κἀρράχιζε, τοὺς δὲ δεσμίους
ᾐκίζεθ' ὥστε φῶτας ἐν ποίμναις πίτνων. 300
τέλος δ' ὑπᾴξας διὰ θυρῶν σκιᾷ τινι
λόγους ἀνέσπα, τοὺς μὲν Ἀτρειδῶν κάτα,
τοὺς δ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσσεῖ, συντιθεὶς γέλων πολύν,
ὅσην κατ' αὐτῶν ὕβριν ἐκτίσαιτ' ἰών·
κἄπειτ' ἐπᾴξας αὖθις ἐς δόμους πάλιν,
ἔμφρων μόλις πως ξὺν χρόνῳ καθίσταται,
καὶ πλῆρες ἄτης ὡς διοπτεύει στέγος,
παίσας κάρα 'θώϋξεν· ἐν δ' ἐρειπίοις
νεκρῶν ἐρειφθεὶς ἕζετ' ἀρνείου φόνου,
κόμην ἀπρὶξ ὄνυξι συλλαβὼν χερί. 310
καὶ τὸν μὲν ἧστο πλεῖστον ἄφθογγος χρόνον·
ἔπειτ' ἐμοὶ τὰ δείν' ἐπηπείλησ' ἔπη,
εἰ μὴ φανοίην πᾶν τὸ συντυχὸν πάθος,
κἀνήρετ' ἐν τῷ πράγματος κυροῖ ποτέ.
κἀγώ, φίλοι, δείσασα τοὐξειργασμένον
ἔλεξα πᾶν ὅσονπερ ἐξηπιστάμην.
ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ἐξῴμωξεν οἰμωγὰς λυγράς,
ἃς οὔποτ' αὐτοῦ πρόσθεν εἰσήκουσ' ἐγώ·
πρὸς γὰρ κακοῦ τε καὶ βαρυψύχου γόους
τοιούσδ' ἀεί ποτ' ἀνδρὸς ἐξηγεῖτ' ἔχειν· 320
ἀλλ' ἀψόφητος ὀξέων κωκυμάτων
ὑπεστέναζε ταῦρος ὣς βρυχώμενος.
νῦν δ' ἐν τοιᾷδε κείμενος κακῇ τύχῃ

[1] εὔκερων MSS., Schneidewin corr.

"Woman, for women silence is a grace."
Admonished thus I held my tongue; but he
Sped forth alone. What happened afterwards
I know not, but he came back with his spoil,
Oxen and sheep dogs with their fleecy charge.
Some he beheads, of some the upturned necks
He cuts, or cleaves the chine; others again
He buffeted and mangled in their bonds,
Mauling the beasts, as if they had been men.
At last he darted through the door and held
Wild converse with some phantom of the brain;
Now the Atridae, and Odysseus now,
He mocked with peals of laughter, vaunting loud
The vengeance he had wreaked on them. Anon
He rushed indoors again; and then in time
With painful struggles was himself again.
And as he scanned the havoc all around,
He smote his head and wailed and sank to earth,
A wreck among the wreck of slaughtered sheep,
Digging into his hair his clenchèd nails.
At first—a long, long while—he spake no word,
Then against me he uttered those dire threats,
If I declared not all that had befallen,
Bidding me tell him in what plight he stood.
And I a-tremble told him what had chanced,
So far as I had knowledge. Whereat he
Broke into lamentations, piercing, shrill,
Such as I ne'er had heard from him before.
For 'twas his creed that wailings and lament
Are for the craven and faint-hearts; no shrill
Complaint escaped him ever; his low moan
Was like the muffled bellowing of a bull.
But now, confounded in his abject woe,

ἄσιτος ἀνήρ, ἄποτος, ἐν μέσοις βοτοῖς
σιδηροκμῆσιν ἥσυχος θακεῖ πεσών·
καὶ δῆλός ἐστιν ὥς τι δρασείων κακόν.
τοιαῦτα γάρ πως καὶ λέγει κὠδύρεται.
ἀλλ', ὦ φίλοι, τούτων γὰρ οὕνεκ' ἐστάλην,
ἀρήξατ' εἰσελθόντες, εἰ δύνασθέ τι·
φίλων γὰρ οἱ τοιοίδε νικῶνται λόγοις. 330

ΧΟΡΟΣ
Τέκμησσα, δεινά, παῖ Τελεύταντος, λέγεις
ἡμῖν, τὸν ἄνδρα διαπεφοιβάσθαι κακοῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ
ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
τάχ', ὡς ἔοικε, μᾶλλον· ἢ οὐκ ἠκούσατε
Αἴαντος οἵαν τήνδε θωΰσσει βοήν;

ΑΙΑΣ
ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀνὴρ ἔοικεν ἢ νοσεῖν ἢ τοῖς πάλαι
νοσήμασιν ξυνοῦσι λυπεῖσθαι παρών.

ΑΙΑΣ
ἰὼ παῖ παῖ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ὤμοι τάλαιν'· Εὐρύσακες, ἀμφὶ σοὶ βοᾷ. 340
τί ποτε μενοινᾷ; ποῦ ποτ' εἶ; τάλαιν' ἐγώ.

ΑΙΑΣ
Τεῦκρον καλῶ. ποῦ Τεῦκρος; ἢ τὸν εἰσαεὶ
λεηλατήσει χρόνον, ἐγὼ δ' ἀπόλλυμαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ
ἀνὴρ φρονεῖν ἔοικεν. ἀλλ' ἀνοίγετε.
τάχ' ἄν τιν' αἰδῶ κἀπ' ἐμοὶ βλέψας λάβοι.

Refusing food or drink, he sits there still,
Just where he fell amid the carcases
Of the slain sheep and cattle. And 'tis plain
He meditates some mischief, so I read
His muttered exclamations and laments.
Come, friends, and help me, if so be ye can—
This was my errand—men in case like his
Are won to reason by the words of friends.

CHORUS

Tecmessa, daughter of Teleutas, dread
Thy tidings of our master thus distraught.

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

TECMESSA

Worse is to come, I fear me. Heard ye not
The voice of Ajax—that heartrending cry?

AJAX

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

'Tis a fresh fit, methinks, or else he groans
At sight of all the ills his frenzy wrought.

AJAX

My son, my son!

TECMESSA

Ah me! Eurysaces, 'tis for thee he calls.
What would he? Where art thou, my son? ah me!

AJAX

Ho Teucer! where is Teucer? Will his raid
End never? And the while I am undone!

CHORUS

He seems himself again. Quick, ope the door.
Perchance the sight of us his humble friends
May bring him to a soberer mood.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰδού, διοίγω· προσβλέπειν δ' ἔξεστί σοι
τὰ τοῦδε πράγη, καὐτὸς ὡς ἔχων κυρεῖ.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ — στρ. α'
φίλοι ναυβάται, μόνοι ἐμῶν φίλων,
μόνοι ἔτ' ἐμμένοντες ὀρθῷ νόμῳ, — 350
ἴδεσθέ μ' οἷον ἄρτι κῦμα φοινίας ὑπὸ ζάλης
ἀμφίδρομον κυκλεῖται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἴμ' ὡς ἔοικας ὀρθὰ μαρτυρεῖν ἄγαν.
δηλοῖ δὲ τοὔργον ὡς ἀφροντίστως ἔχει.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ — ἀντ. α'
γένος ναΐας ἀρωγὸν τέχνας,
ἅλιον ὃς ἐπέβας ἑλίσσων πλάταν,
σέ τοι σέ τοι μόνον δέδορκα πημονὰν ἐπαρκέσοντ'· — 360
ἀλλά με συνδάϊξον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὔφημα φώνει· μὴ κακὸν κακῷ διδοὺς
ἄκος, πλέον τὸ πῆμα τῆς ἄτης τίθει.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὁρᾷς τὸν θρασύν, τὸν εὐκάρδιον, — στρ. β'
τὸν ἐν δαΐοις ἄτρεστον μάχαις,
ἐν ἀφόβοις με θηρσὶ δεινὸν χέρας;
ὤμοι γέλωτος, οἷον ὑβρίσθην ἄρα.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

μή, δέσποτ' Αἴας, λίσσομαί σ', αὔδα τάδε.

ΑΙΑΣ

οὐκ ἐκτός; οὐκ ἄψορρον ἐκνεμεῖ πόδα;
αἰαῖ αἰαῖ. — 370

TECMESSA

I open,
And thou mayst view his works and his own plight.

AJAX

Mariners, ever leal and true, (*Str.* 1)
Alas my friends have left me, all but you,
See how disasters whelmed me like a flood,
And now I welter in a surge of blood.

CHORUS

Ah, lady, thy report was all too true,
Too clear the tokens of an unhinged brain.

AJAX

Sailors brave, whose flashing oar (*Ant.* 1)
Swift and sure the good ship bore,
To you I look for comfort, none but you;
Come slay me too.

CHORUS

O hush, essay not ill by ill to cure,
Nor aggravate the burden of thy doom.

AJAX

See'st thou the bold, stout-hearted knight (*Str.* 2)
Who never quailed to face the fight,
Now on tame beasts that fear no harm
He proves the puissance of his arm.
Ah me! the mockery, the scorn, the shame!

TECMESSA

Ajax, my dearest master, speak not so.

AJAX

Out with thee, woman; hence, avaunt, begone!
Ah me! ah me!

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ πρὸς θεῶν ὕπεικε καὶ φρόνησον εὖ.

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ δύσμορος, ὃς χερὶ μὲν
μεθῆκα τοὺς ἀλάστορας, ἐν δ' ἑλίκεσσι
βουσὶ καὶ κλυτοῖς πεσὼν αἰπολίοις
ἐρεμνὸν αἷμ' ἔδευσα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ἀλγοίης ἐπ' ἐξειργασμένοις;
οὐ γὰρ γένοιτ' ἂν ταῦθ' ὅπως οὐχ ὧδ' ἔχειν.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ πάνθ' ὁρῶν ἁπάντων τ' ἀεὶ ἀντ. β'
κακῶν ὄργανον, τέκνον Λαρτίου, 380
κακοπινέστατόν τ' ἄλημα στρατοῦ,
ἦ που πολὺν γέλωθ' ὑφ' ἡδονῆς ἄγεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξύν τοι θεῷ πᾶς καὶ γελᾷ κὠδύρεται.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἴδοιμι μήν[1] νιν, καίπερ ὧδ' ἀτώμενος.
ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν μέγ' εἴπῃς· οὐχ ὁρᾷς ἵν' εἶ κακοῦ;

ΑΙΑΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, προγόνων προπάτωρ,
πῶς ἂν τὸν αἱμυλώτατον, ἐχθρὸν ἄλημα,
τούς τε δισσάρχας ὀλέσσας βασιλῆς 390
τέλος θάνοιμι καὐτός;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὅταν κατεύχῃ ταῦθ', ὁμοῦ κἀμοὶ θανεῖν
εὔχου· τί γὰρ δεῖ ζῆν με σοῦ τεθνηκότος;

[1] Dindorf adds μήν.

CHORUS

O listen, I adjure thee, and be ruled.

AJAX

Wretch to let those fiends, my foes,
Slip, while on the flock my blows
And the goodly cattle rained,
Till with their dark blood all the house was stained.

CHORUS

Why vex thyself for what is past recall?
What's done is done and naught can alter it.

AJAX

Spy of the time, apt tool for any guile, (*Ant.* 2)
Of all the host the sublest knave, most vile,
Son of Laertes, loud and long, I trow,
Thou laughest in malignant triumph now.

CHORUS

Laughter or mourning comes as God ordains.

AJAX

Would I could see him, shattered though I be!
Ah me!

CHORUS

No boastful words; see'st not thy piteous case?

AJAX

O Zeus, my grand sire, would that I
Might slay that knave, my bane,
That arch-dissembler and the generals twain.
Then let me die!

TECMESSA

When thus thou prayest, pray that I with thee
May die; why should I live when thou art dead?

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ　　　　στρ. γʹ
σκότος, ἐμὸν φάος,
ἔρεβος ὦ φαεννότατον, ὡς ἐμοί,
ἕλεσθʼ ἕλεσθέ μʼ οἰκήτορα,
ἕλεσθέ μʼ· οὔτε γὰρ θεῶν γένος οὔθʼ ἁμερίων
ἔτʼ ἄξιος βλέπειν τινʼ εἰς ὄνασιν ἀνθρώπων.　　　　400
ἀλλά μʼ ἁ Διὸς
ἀλκίμα θεὸς
ὀλέθριʼ αἰκίζει.
ποῖ τις οὖν φύγῃ;
ποῖ μολὼν μενῶ;
εἰ τὰ μὲν φθίνει, φίλοι, τοιοῖσδʼ[1]
ὁμοῦ πέλας, μώραις δʼ ἄγραις προσκείμεθα,
πᾶς δὲ στρατὸς δίπαλτος ἄν με
χειρὶ φονεύοι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ δυστάλαινα, τοιάδʼ ἄνδρα χρήσιμον　　　　410
φωνεῖν, ἃ πρόσθεν οὗτος οὐκ ἔτλη ποτʼ ἄν.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἰὼ　　　　ἀντ. γʹ
πόροι ἁλίρροθοι
πάραλά τʼ ἄντρα καὶ νέμος ἐπάκτιον,
πολὺν πολύν με δαρόν τε δὴ
κατείχετʼ ἀμφὶ Τροίαν χρόνον· ἀλλʼ οὐκέτι μʼ, οὐκ
ἔτʼ ἀμπνοὰς ἔχοντα· τοῦτό τις φρονῶν ἴστω.
ὦ Σκαμάνδριοι
γείτονες ῥοαί,
εὔφρονες Ἀργείοις,　　　　420
οὐκέτʼ ἄνδρα μὴ
τόνδʼ ἴδητʼ, ἔπος

[1] τοῖσδʼ MSS., Jebb corr.

AJAX

O woe is me! (*Str.* 3)
Darkness, my light!
O nether gloom to me more bright
Than midday, take, O take me to your care!
I am too vile to share
The kindly aid of mortals, and the gods
Have left me. Nay, the Warrior Maid, Zeus-born,
Laughs me to scorn;
I quail beneath her rods.
Whither to fly? What hope of rest is left,
If of my ancient fame bereft,
Dead as these slaughtered sheep around me slain,
A madman's crown I gain,
While all the host at my devoted head
Would strike, and smite me dead?

TECMESSA

Ah me that one so good should utter words
That hitherto he ne'er had deigned to breathe!

AJAX

Paths of the roaring waves, (*Ant.* 3)
Ye salt sea caves
And pastures by the shore,
Where long, too long I roam
In Troy-land, far from home;
Me shall ye see no more—
No more in life. Give ear
All who can hear.
Streams of Scamander, rills
That flow from Ida's hills,
Streams to the Greeks so dear,
Ne'er shall ye look on Ajax more;

ἐξερῶ μέγ᾽, οἷον οὔτινα
Τροία στρατοῦ δέρχθη χθονὸς μολόντ᾽ ἀπὸ
Ἑλλανίδος· τανῦν δ᾽ ἄτιμος
ὧδε πρόκειμαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὔτοι σ᾽ ἀπείργειν οὐδ᾽ ὅπως ἐῶ λέγειν
ἔχω, κακοῖς τοιοῖσδε συμπεπτωκότα.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἰαῖ· τίς ἄν ποτ᾽ ᾤεθ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἐπώνυμον 430
τοὐμὸν ξυνοίσειν ὄνομα τοῖς ἐμοῖς κακοῖς;
νῦν γὰρ πάρεστι καὶ δὶς αἰάζειν ἐμοὶ
καὶ τρίς· τοιούτοις γὰρ κακοῖς ἐντυγχάνω·
ὅτου πατὴρ μὲν τῆσδ᾽ ἀπ᾽ Ἰδαίας χθονὸς
τὰ πρῶτα καλλιστεῖ᾽ ἀριστεύσας στρατοῦ
πρὸς οἶκον ἦλθε πᾶσαν εὔκλειαν φέρων·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὁ κείνου παῖς, τὸν αὐτὸν ἐς τόπον
Τροίας ἐπελθὼν οὐκ ἐλάσσονι σθένει
οὐδ᾽ ἔργα μείω χειρὸς ἀρκέσας ἐμῆς,
ἄτιμος Ἀργείοισιν ὧδ᾽ ἀπόλλυμαι. 440
καίτοι τοσοῦτόν γ᾽ ἐξεπίστασθαι δοκῶ·
εἰ ζῶν Ἀχιλλεὺς τῶν ὅπλων τῶν ὧν πέρι
κρίνειν ἔμελλε κράτος ἀριστείας τινί,
οὐκ ἄν τις αὔτ᾽ ἔμαρψεν ἄλλος ἀντ᾽ ἐμοῦ.
νῦν δ᾽ αὔτ᾽ Ἀτρεῖδαι φωτὶ παντουργῷ φρένας
ἔπραξαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδ᾽ ἀπώσαντες κράτη.
κεἰ μὴ τόδ᾽ ὄμμα καὶ φρένες διάστροφοι
γνώμης ἀπῇξαν τῆς ἐμῆς, οὐκ ἄν ποτε
δίκην κατ᾽ ἄλλου φωτὸς ὧδ᾽ ἐψήφισαν.
νῦν δ᾽ ἡ Διὸς γοργῶπις ἀδάματος θεὰ 450

A paladin whose peer
(For I will utter a proud boast)
In all the Grecian host
That sailed from Hellas' shore
Troy ne'er beheld. But now
Low in the dust, o'erthrown, his head doth bow.

CHORUS

How to restrain or how to let thee speak
I cannot tell, beset by endless woes.

AJAX

Ay me! Whoe'er had thought how well my name
Would fit my misery? Ay me! Ay me![1]
Yea, twice and thrice may I repeat the wail
That syllables my woe-begone estate.
My sire, a peerless warrior, home returned
Back from the land of Ida, crowned with fame,
Proclaimed as champion bravest of the brave.
And I, his son, in might not less than he,
Sailed after him to this same land of Troy,
And served the host by deeds of no less worth,
And for reward I perish by the Greeks
Dishonoured. Yet one thing I know full well:
If to Achilles living it had fallen
His arms as meed of valour to award,
No man had grasped the prize, preferred to me.
But now the Atridae, scouting my just claim,
Have yielded to a miscreant's base intrigue.
Had not mine eyes been dazed, my mind distraught
And wrested from its purpose, they had never
Procured false sentence 'gainst a second man.
Alas! the grim-eyed goddess, unsubdued
Daughter of Zeus—as I was at their heels,

[1] Like Shakespeare's 'Gaunt' (*Richard II*, II. i) he plays on his name *Aias*.

ἤδη μ' ἐπ' αὐτοῖς χεῖρ' ἐπευτύνοντ' ἐμὴν
ἔσφηλεν, ἐμβαλοῦσα λυσσώδη νόσον,
ὥστ' ἐν τοιοῖσδε χεῖρας αἱμάξαι βοτοῖς·
κεῖνοι δ' ἐπεγγελῶσιν ἐκπεφευγότες,
ἐμοῦ μὲν οὐχ ἑκόντος· εἰ δέ τις θεῶν
βλάπτοι, φύγοι τἂν χὠ κακὸς τὸν κρείσσονα.
καὶ νῦν τί χρὴ δρᾶν; ὅστις ἐμφανῶς θεοῖς
ἐχθαίρομαι, μισεῖ δέ μ' Ἑλλήνων στρατός,
ἔχθει δὲ Τροία πᾶσα καὶ πεδία τάδε.
πότερα πρὸς οἴκους, ναυλόχους λιπὼν ἕδρας 460
μόνους τ' Ἀτρείδας, πέλαγος Αἰγαῖον περῶ;
καὶ ποῖον ὄμμα πατρὶ δηλώσω φανεὶς
Τελαμῶνι; πῶς με τλήσεταί ποτ' εἰσιδεῖν
γυμνὸν φανέντα τῶν ἀριστείων ἄτερ,
ὧν αὐτὸς ἔσχε στέφανον εὐκλείας μέγαν;
οὐκ ἔστι τοὔργον τλητόν. ἀλλὰ δῆτ' ἰὼν
πρὸς ἔρυμα Τρώων, ξυμπεσὼν μόνος μόνοις
καὶ δρῶν τι χρηστόν, εἶτα λοίσθιον θάνω;
ἀλλ' ὧδέ γ' Ἀτρείδας ἂν εὐφράναιμί που.
οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτα. πεῖρά τις ζητητέα 470
τοιάδ' ἀφ' ἧς γέροντι δηλώσω πατρὶ
μή τοι φύσιν γ' ἄσπλαγχνος ἐκ κείνου γεγώς.
αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ἄνδρα τοῦ μακροῦ χρῄζειν βίου,
κακοῖσιν ὅστις μηδὲν ἐξαλλάσσεται.
τί γὰρ παρ' ἦμαρ ἡμέρα τέρπειν ἔχει
προσθεῖσα κἀναθεῖσα τοῦ γε κατθανεῖν;
οὐκ ἂν πριαίμην οὐδενὸς λόγου βροτὸν
ὅστις κεναῖσιν ἐλπίσιν θερμαίνεται·
ἀλλ' ἢ καλῶς ζῆν ἢ καλῶς τεθνηκέναι
τὸν εὐγενῆ χρή. πάντ' ἀκήκοας λόγον. 480

Almost at grips with them, in act to strike—
Foiled me, abused me by a frenzy fit,
Imbrued my hands with blood of these poor beasts.
And thus my foes exult in their escape,
Albeit I willed it not, and mock at me.
But if some god or goddess intervene,
Even a knave may worst the better man.
And now what's left me? By the gods, 'tis clear,
I am detested, hated by the host
Of Greeks, abhorred by Troy and all the camp.
Shall I sail homeward o'er the Aegean, leave
The sons of Atreus to fight on alone,
This roadstead undefended? Then how face
My father Telamon? How will he endure
To look on me returning empty-handed
Without the meed of valour that he held
Himself, a crown of everlasting fame?
That were intolerable. Am I then
Alone to storm the Trojan battlements,
And facing single-handed a whole host,
Do some high deed of prowess—and so die?
Nay, that methinks would give the Atridae joy.
It may not be; some emprise must be found
That shall convince my aged sire his son
Is not, in soul at least, degenerate.
Base were it that a man whose misery
Knows neither change nor respite should desire
To drain life to the dregs. What joy is there?
Day follows day; each added to the sum
Of life is one step nearer to the grave.
I would not count that mortal worth a doigt
Who lives on, fed by visionary hopes.
Nobly to live—that is the true knight's choice,
Or nobly end his life. I have said my say.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδεὶς ἐρεῖ ποθ' ὡς ὑπόβλητον λόγον,
Αἴας, ἔλεξας, ἀλλὰ τῆς σαυτοῦ φρενός·
παῦσαί γε μέντοι καὶ δὸς ἀνδράσιν φίλοις
γνώμης κρατῆσαι, τάσδε φροντίδας μεθείς.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ δέσποτ' Αἴας, τῆς ἀναγκαίας τύχης
οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδὲν μεῖζον ἀνθρώποις κακόν.
ἐγὼ δ' ἐλευθέρου μὲν ἐξέφυν πατρός,
εἴπερ τινὸς σθένοντος ἐν πλούτῳ Φρυγῶν·
νῦν δ' εἰμὶ δούλη· θεοῖς γὰρ ὧδ' ἔδοξέ που
καὶ σῇ μάλιστα χειρί. τοιγαροῦν, ἐπεὶ 490
τὸ σὸν λέχος ξυνῆλθον, εὖ φρονῶ τὰ σά,
καί σ' ἀντιάζω πρός τ' ἐφεστίου Διὸς
εὐνῆς τε τῆς σῆς, ᾗ συνηλλάχθης ἐμοί,
μή μ' ἀξιώσῃς βάξιν ἀλγεινὴν λαβεῖν
τῶν σῶν ὑπ' ἐχθρῶν, χειρίαν ἐφείς τινι.
ᾗ γὰρ θάνῃς σὺ καὶ τελευτήσας ἀφῇς,
ταύτῃ νόμιζε κἀμὲ τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρᾳ
βίᾳ ξυναρπασθεῖσαν Ἀργείων ὕπο
ξὺν παιδὶ τῷ σῷ δουλίαν ἕξειν τροφήν.
καί τις πικρὸν πρόσφθεγμα δεσποτῶν ἐρεῖ 500
λόγοις ἰάπτων· ἴδετε τὴν ὁμευνέτιν
Αἴαντος, ὃς μέγιστον ἴσχυσεν στρατοῦ,
οἵας λατρείας ἀνθ' ὅσου ζήλου τρέφει.
τοιαῦτ' ἐρεῖ τις· κἀμὲ μὲν δαίμων ἐλᾷ,
σοὶ δ' αἰσχρὰ τἄπη ταῦτα καὶ τῷ σῷ γένει.
ἀλλ' αἴδεσαι μὲν πατέρα τὸν σὸν ἐν λυγρῷ
γήρᾳ προλείπων, αἴδεσαι δὲ μητέρα
πολλῶν ἐτῶν κληροῦχον, ἥ σε πολλάκις
θεοῖς ἀρᾶται ζῶντα πρὸς δόμους μολεῖν·
οἴκτιρε δ', ὦναξ, παῖδα τὸν σόν, εἰ νέας 510

CHORUS

No man will charge thee, Ajax, with feigned words.
'Twas thy heart spoke; yet pause and put aside
These dark thoughts; let thyself be ruled by friends.

TECMESSA

Ah, my lord Ajax, heavier lot is none
Than to lie helpless in the coils of fate.
I was the daughter of a high-born sire
Of Phrygians unsurpassed in wealth and might.
And now, I am a slave; 'twas so ordained
By Heaven, methinks, and by thy might of arm.
Since fate has willed, then, I should share thy bed,
Thy good is mine; and O by the god of the hearth,
O by the wedded bond that made us one,
Let me not fall into a stranger's hand,
A laughing-stock! For, surely, if thou die
And leave me widowed, on that very day
I shall be seized and haled away by force,
I and thy son, prey to the Argive host,
Our portion slavery. Then shall I hear
The flouts and gibes that my new lords let fly.
"Look on her," one will say, "the leman once
Of Ajax, mightiest of the Argive chiefs,
How has she fallen from her place of pride!"
Thus will they prate, and hard will be my lot,
But on thy race and thee how foul a slur.
Take pity and bethink thee of the sire
Thou leavest, an old man, disconsolate;
Bethink thee of thy mother bowed with years,
Think of her prayers and vows for thy return.
And, O my lord, take pity on thy son,

τροφῆς στερηθεὶς σοῦ διοίσεται μόνος
ὑπ' ὀρφανιστῶν μὴ φίλων, ὅσον κακὸν
κείνῳ τε κἀμοὶ τοῦθ', ὅταν θάνῃς, νεμεῖς.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἔστιν εἰς ὅ τι βλέπω
πλὴν σοῦ. σὺ γάρ μοι πατρίδ' ᾔστωσας δόρει,
καὶ μητέρ' ἄλλη μοῖρα τὸν φύσαντά τε
καθεῖλεν Ἅιδου θανασίμους οἰκήτορας.
τίς δῆτ' ἐμοὶ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀντὶ σοῦ πατρίς;
τίς πλοῦτος; ἐν σοὶ πᾶσ' ἔγωγε σῴζομαι.
ἀλλ' ἴσχε κἀμοῦ μνῆστιν· ἀνδρί τοι χρεὼν 520
μνήμην προσεῖναι, τερπνὸν εἴ τί που πάθοι.
χάρις χάριν γάρ ἐστιν ἡ τίκτουσ' ἀεί·
ὅτου δ' ἀπορρεῖ μνῆστις εὖ πεπονθότος,
οὐκ ἂν γένοιτ' ἔθ' οὗτος εὐγενὴς ἀνήρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Αἴας, ἔχειν σ' ἂν οἶκτον ὡς κἀγὼ φρενὶ
θέλοιμ' ἄν· αἰνοίης γὰρ ἂν τὰ τῆσδ' ἔπη.

ΑΙΑΣ

καὶ κάρτ' ἐπαίνου τεύξεται πρὸς γοῦν ἐμοῦ,
ἐὰν μόνον τὸ ταχθὲν εὖ τολμᾷ τελεῖν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀλλ' ὦ φίλ' Αἴας, πάντ' ἔγωγε πείσομαι.

ΑΙΑΣ

κόμιζέ νύν μοι παῖδα τὸν ἐμόν, ὡς ἴδω. 530

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν φόβοισί γ' αὐτὸν ἐξελυσάμην.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἐν τοῖσδε τοῖς κακοῖσιν; ἢ τί μοι λέγεις;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

μὴ σοί γέ που δύστηνος ἀντήσας θάνοι.

ΑΙΑΣ

πρέπον γέ τἂν ἦν δαίμονος τοὐμοῦ τόδε.

Orphaned, without a father's fostering care,
The ward of loveless guardians ; if thou die,
What heritage of woe is his and mine !
For I have naught to look to anywhere
Save thee. By thee my country was laid waste,
My mother and my father too were snatched
To dwell with Hades by another fate.
What home is left me then, if thou art ta'en?
What weal? my welfare is bound up in thee.
Think of me also : gratitude is due
From man for favours that a woman gives.
Kindness return of kindness e'er begets.
Who lets the memory of service pass
Him will I ne'er with noble spirits rank.

CHORUS

Ajax, I would that thou wert moved as I
To pity ; then wouldst thou approve her rede.

AJAX

Yea, and my full approval she shall win,
If only she take heart to do my hest.

TECMESSA

Aye, my dear lord, I will obey in all.

AJAX

Bring hither then my son, that I may see him.

TECMESSA

Oh, in alarm I sent him from my charge.

AJAX

When I was stricken? Or what meanest thou?

TECMESSA

Yea, lest the poor child meeting thee should die.

AJAX

That fate indeed had matched my fortunes well.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἀλλ' οὖν ἐγὼ 'φύλαξα τοῦτό γ' ἀρκέσαι.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἐπῄνεσ' ἔργον καὶ πρόνοιαν ἣν ἔθου.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ὡς ἐκ τῶνδ' ἂν ὠφελοῖμί σε;

ΑΙΑΣ

δός μοι προσειπεῖν αὐτὸν ἐμφανῆ τ' ἰδεῖν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν πέλας γε προσπόλοις φυλάσσεται.

ΑΙΑΣ

τί δῆτα μέλλει μὴ οὐ παρουσίαν ἔχειν; 540

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὦ παῖ, πατὴρ καλεῖ σε. δεῦρο προσπόλων
ἄγ' αὐτὸν ὅσπερ χερσὶν εὐθύνων κυρεῖς.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἕρποντι φωνεῖς ἢ λελειμμένῳ λόγων;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ δὴ κομίζει προσπόλων ὅδ' ἐγγύθεν.

ΑΙΑΣ

αἶρ' αὐτόν, αἶρε δεῦρο· ταρβήσει γὰρ οὒ
νεοσφαγῆ που τόνδε προσλεύσσων φόνον,
εἴπερ δικαίως ἔστ' ἐμὸς τὰ πατρόθεν.
ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' ὠμοῖς αὐτὸν ἐν νόμοις πατρὸς
δεῖ πωλοδαμνεῖν κἀξομοιοῦσθαι φύσιν.
ὦ παῖ, γένοιο πατρὸς εὐτυχέστερος, 550
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ὅμοιος· καὶ γένοι' ἂν οὐ κακός.
καίτοι σε καὶ νῦν τοῦτό γε ζηλοῦν ἔχω,
ὁθούνεκ' οὐδὲν τῶνδ' ἐπαισθάνει κακῶν·
ἐν τῷ φρονεῖν γὰρ μηδὲν ἥδιστος βίος,

TECMESSA

Well, I averted that calamity.

AJAX

Thy forethought and the action I commend.

TECMESSA

As the case stands, how can I do thy hest?

AJAX

Let me speak to him—see him face to face.

TECMESSA

Good; he is in our servants' charge close by.

AJAX

Then wherefore is his coming thus delayed?

TECMESSA

My child, thy father calls thee.
(*To the* SERVANTS)
Bring him hither,
Whoever of you guides his infant steps.

AJAX

Comes he, or has he failed to hear thy call?

TECMESSA

I see one just approaching with the boy.
(EURYSACES *is led forward.*)

AJAX

Lift him, O lift him to my arms; no dread,
If he be mine, his father's true-born son,
He'll feel in gazing on this fresh spilt blood.
He must be early trained and broken in
To the stern rule of life his father held,
And moulded to the likeness of his sire.
My boy, mayst thou prove happier than thy sire,
But like him in all else, and thou wilt prove
No weakling; nay, e'en now, in this at least
I envy thee: of woes thou wottest naught,

[τὸ μὴ φρονεῖν γὰρ κάρτ' ἀνώδυνον κακόν][1]
ἕως τὸ χαίρειν καὶ τὸ λυπεῖσθαι μάθῃς.
ὅταν δ' ἵκῃ πρὸς τοῦτο, δεῖ σ' ὅπως πατρὸς
δείξεις ἐν ἐχθροῖς, οἷος ἐξ οἵου 'τράφης.
τέως δὲ κούφοις πνεύμασιν βόσκου, νέαν
ψυχὴν ἀτάλλων, μητρὶ τῇδε χαρμονήν.
οὔτοι σ' Ἀχαιῶν, οἶδα, μή τις ὑβρίσῃ 560
στυγναῖσι λώβαις, οὐδὲ χωρὶς ὄντ' ἐμοῦ.
τοῖον πυλωρὸν φύλακα Τεῦκρον ἀμφί σοι
λείψω τροφῇ τ' ἄοκνον ἔμπα, κεἰ τανῦν
τηλωπὸς οἰχνεῖ, δυσμενῶν θήραν ἔχων.
ἀλλ', ἄνδρες ἀσπιστῆρες, ἐνάλιος λεώς,
ὑμῖν τε κοινὴν τήνδ' ἐπισκήπτω χάριν,
κείνῳ τ' ἐμὴν ἀγγείλατ' ἐντολήν, ὅπως
τὸν παῖδα τόνδε πρὸς δόμους ἐμοὺς ἄγων
Τελαμῶνι δείξει μητρί τ', Ἐριβοίᾳ λέγω,
ὥς σφιν γένηται γηροβοσκὸς εἰσαεί, 570
[μέχρις οὗ μυχοὺς κίχωσι τοῦ κάτω θεοῦ],[2]
καὶ τἀμὰ τεύχη μήτ' ἀγωνάρχαι τινὲς
θήσουσ' Ἀχαιοῖς μήθ' ὁ λυμεὼν ἐμός.
ἀλλ' αὐτό μοι σύ, παῖ, λαβὼν ἐπώνυμον,
Εὐρύσακες, ἴσχε διὰ πολυρράφου στρέφων
πόρπακος, ἑπτάβοιον ἄρρηκτον σάκος·
τὰ δ' ἄλλα τεύχη κοίν' ἐμοὶ τεθάψεται.
ἀλλ' ὡς τάχος τὸν παῖδα τόνδ' ἤδη δέχου
καὶ δῶμα πάκτου, μηδ' ἐπισκήνους γόους
δάκρυε· κάρτα τοι φιλοίκτιστον γυνή. 580
πύκαζε θᾶσσον· οὐ πρὸς ἰατροῦ σοφοῦ
θρηνεῖν ἐπῳδὰς πρὸς τομῶντι πήματι.

[1] Omitted by Stobaeus.
[2] Omitted as spurious by most Editors.

For ignorance is life's extremest bliss—
The years when joy and sorrow are both unknown.
But when thou reachest manhood, then's the time
To prove the inbred virtue of thy race,
And shew thy father's foes whose son thou art.
Meanwhile let light airs feed thee ; cherish thou
Thy tender years to glad thy mother's heart.
Thou need'st not fear that any of the Greeks
Will tease or vex thee, e'en when I am gone.
So stout a guardian will I leave in charge,
Whose watchful eye will slumber not, though now
A foray 'gainst his enemies keeps him hence.
And ye, my seamen, comrades in the fight,
(On you no less than him I lay this charge
Of love) to him convey my last behest.
Bid him from me take home this son of mine
To Eriboea and to Telamon,
That he may comfort their old age till death.
And for my arms, let no Greek arbiter
Of games (so bid him) nor my venomous foe
Set them as prize for the Achaean host.
But this, the shield from which thou took'st thy name,[1]
Take this, my son, this sevenfold, spear-proof targe,
Take it and wield it by the close-stitched thongs.
My other arms shall lie with me interred.
Quick, take the child, delay not; close the doors,
Nor at the tent side moan and make lament.
In sooth a woman is a tearful thing.
Quick, make all fast: 'tis not a skilful leech
Who mumbles charms o'er ills that need the knife.

[1] Eurysaces means 'broad shield.'

ΧΟΡΟΣ
δέδοικ᾽ ἀκούων τήνδε τὴν προθυμίαν·
οὐ γάρ μ᾽ ἀρέσκει γλῶσσά σου τεθηγμένη.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ὦ δέσποτ᾽ Αἴας, τί ποτε δρασείεις φρενί;

ΑΙΑΣ
μὴ κρῖνε, μὴ ᾽ξέταζε· σωφρονεῖν καλόν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
οἴμ᾽ ὡς ἀθυμῶ· καί σε πρὸς τοῦ σοῦ τέκνου
καὶ θεῶν ἱκνοῦμαι, μὴ προδοὺς ἡμᾶς γένῃ.

ΑΙΑΣ
ἄγαν γε λυπεῖς· οὐ κάτοισθ᾽ ἐγὼ θεοῖς
ὡς οὐδὲν ἀρκεῖν εἴμ᾽ ὀφειλέτης ἔτι; 590

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
εὔφημα φώνει.

ΑΙΑΣ
τοῖς ἀκούουσιν λέγε.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
σὺ δ᾽ οὐχὶ πείσει;

ΑΙΑΣ
πόλλ᾽ ἄγαν ἤδη θροεῖς.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
ταρβῶ γάρ, ὦναξ.

ΑΙΑΣ
οὐ ξυνέρξεθ᾽ ὡς τάχος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ
πρὸς θεῶν, μαλάσσου.

ΑΙΑΣ
μῶρά μοι δοκεῖς φρονεῖν,
εἰ τοὐμὸν ἦθος ἄρτι παιδεύειν νοεῖς.

CHORUS

I tremble as I mark this eager haste:
Thy words are sharp as swords and like me not.

TECMESSA

O my lord Ajax, what is in thy heart?

AJAX

Question not, ask not; be discreet and wise.

TECMESSA

Ah me, I quail, I faint. O by thy child,
By heaven I implore thee, fail us not.

AJAX

Thou art importunate; know'st not that I
Henceforward owe no duty to the gods?

TECMESSA

Oh hush, blaspheme not!

AJAX

Speak to ears that hear.

TECMESSA

Wilt thou not heed?

AJAX

I have heard from thee too much.

TECMESSA

Fear, my lord, makes me speak.

AJAX

Quick, close the doors.

TECMESSA

Yield, I implore thee.

AJAX

Fond simplicity
If at this hour thou think'st to mould my mood.

[*Exit* AJAX.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ κλεινὰ Σαλαμίς, σὺ μέν που *στρ. α´*
ναίεις ἁλίπλακτος, εὐδαίμων,
πᾶσιν περίφαντος ἀεί·
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ὁ τλάμων παλαιὸς ἀφ᾽ οὗ χρόνος 600
Ἰδαῖα μίμνων λειμῶνι᾽ ἔπαυλα μηνῶν
ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὐνῶμαι[1]
χρόνῳ τρυχόμενος,
κακὰν ἐλπίδ᾽ ἔχων
ἔτι μέ ποτ᾽ ἀνύσειν
τὸν ἀπότροπον ἀΐδηλον Ἅιδαν.

καί μοι δυσθεράπευτος Αἴας *ἀντ. α´*
ξύνεστιν ἔφεδρος, ὤμοι μοι, 610
θείᾳ μανίᾳ ξύναυλος·
ὃν ἐξεπέμψω πρὶν δή ποτε θουρίῳ
κρατοῦντ᾽ ἐν Ἄρει· νῦν δ᾽ αὖ φρενὸς οἰοβώτας
φίλοις μέγα πένθος ηὕρηται.
τὰ πρὶν δ᾽ ἔργα χεροῖν
μεγίστας ἀρετᾶς
ἄφιλα παρ᾽ ἀφίλοις 620
ἔπεσ᾽ ἔπεσε μελέοις Ἀτρείδαις.

στρ. β´

ἦ που παλαιᾷ μὲν σύντροφος[2] ἁμέρᾳ,
λευκῷ δὲ γήρᾳ μάτηρ νιν ὅταν νοσοῦντα
φρενομόρως ἀκούσῃ,
αἴλινον αἴλινον
οὐδ᾽ οἰκτρᾶς γόον ὄρνιθος ἀηδοῦς
ἥσει δύσμορος, ἀλλ᾽ ὀξυτόνους μὲν ᾠδὰς 630

[1] ἰδαία μίμνων | λειμωνίᾳ ποίαι, μήλων | ἀνήριθμος αἰὲν εὔνομαι L.; Lobeck, Bergk, and Jebb corr.
[2] ἔντροφος MSS., Nauck corr.

AJAX

CHORUS

Ah Salamis, blest isle, (*Str.* 1)
Secure, serene,
Above the waves that lash thy shore,
As ocean's queen,
Thou sittest evermore.
But I in exile drear,
Month after month, year after year,
On Ida's meads must bivouac, all forlorn
By time outworn;
And ever nearer, ever darker loom
The night of Hades and eternal gloom.

And now to crown my grief (*Ant.* 1)
Comes a new woe,
My leader Ajax, mad beyond relief,
By heaven laid low;
How fallen from that impetuous chief,
Who sailed to meet the foe.

Now, to his friends' distress,
He sits and broods in sullen loneliness;
Those doughty deeds his right hand wrought
Now count for naught,
And from that loveless pair, those men of sin,
No love but despite win.

(*Str.* 2)

Ah, when his mother, blanched with age and frail
Hears of his shattered reason, what wild wail
Will she upraise, a dirge of shrill despair,

θρηνήσει, χερόπλακτοι δ'
ἐν στέρνοισι πεσοῦνται
δοῦποι καὶ πολιᾶς ἄμυγμα χαίτας.

ἀντ. β'

κρείσσων παρ' Ἅιδᾳ κεύθων ὁ νοσῶν μάταν,
ὃς ἐκ πατρῴας ἥκων γενεᾶς ἄριστος [1]
πολυπόνων Ἀχαιῶν,
οὐκέτι συντρόφοις
ὀργαῖς ἔμπεδος, ἀλλ' ἐκτὸς ὁμιλεῖ. 640
ὦ τλᾶμον πάτερ, οἵαν σε μένει πυθέσθαι
παιδὸς δύσφορον ἄταν,
ἂν οὔπω τις ἔθρεψεν
δίων Αἰακιδᾶν ἄτερθε τοῦδε.

ΑΙΑΣ

ἅπανθ' ὁ μακρὸς κἀναρίθμητος χρόνος
φύει τ' ἄδηλα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται·
κοὐκ ἔστ' ἄελπτον οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἁλίσκεται
χὠ δεινὸς ὅρκος χαἰ περισκελεῖς φρένες.
κἀγὼ γάρ, ὃς τὰ δείν' ἐκαρτέρουν τότε, 650
βαφῇ σίδηρος ὣς ἐθηλύνθην στόμα
πρὸς τῆσδε τῆς γυναικός· οἰκτίρω δέ νιν
χήραν παρ' ἐχθροῖς παῖδά τ' ὀρφανὸν λιπεῖν.
ἀλλ' εἶμι πρός τε λουτρὰ καὶ παρακτίους
λειμῶνας, ὡς ἂν λύμαθ' ἁγνίσας ἐμὰ
μῆνιν βαρεῖαν ἐξαλύξωμαι θεᾶς·
μολών τε χῶρον ἔνθ' ἂν ἀστιβῆ κίχω,
κρύψω τόδ' ἔγχος τοὐμόν, ἔχθιστον βελῶν,
γαίας ὀρύξας ἔνθα μή τις ὄψεται·
ἀλλ' αὐτὸ νὺξ Ἅιδης τε σῳζόντων κάτω. 660
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἐξ οὗ χειρὶ τοῦτ' ἐδεξάμην

[1] ἄριστος added by Triclinius.

(No plaintive ditty of the nightingale)
With beating of the breast and rending of white
hair.

(*Ant.* 2)

Better be buried with the dead
Who lives with brain bewilderèd.
Of all the Greeks toil-worn
Behold the noblest born,
Now from his native temper warped and strange,
Whose thoughts in alien paths distracted range.
O wretched father, what a curse 'tis thine
Upon thy son to hear—curse that on none
E'er fell of all the Aeacidae's great line
Save him alone.

Enter AJAX.

AJAX

Time in its slow, illimitable course
Brings all to light and buries all again;
Strange things it brings to pass, the dreadest oath
Is broken and the stubbornest will is bent.
E'en I whose will aforetime was as iron
Steeled in the dipping, now have lost the edge
Of resolution, by this woman's words
Unmanned, to pity melted at the thought
Of her a widow and my orphan son
Left amidst foemen. But I go my way
To the sea baths and meadows by the beach,
That I may there assoil me and assuage
The wrathful goddess, having purged my sin.
Then will I seek some solitary spot
And hide this sword, of weapons most accursed,
Deep under earth, consigned to Night and Hell,
Where never eye of man may see it more;
For since the day I hanselled it, a gift

παρ' Ἕκτορος δώρημα δυσμενεστάτου,
οὔπω τι κεδνὸν ἔσχον Ἀργείων πάρα.
ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἀληθὴς ἡ βροτῶν παροιμία,
ἐχθρῶν ἄδωρα δῶρα κοὐκ ὀνήσιμα.
τοιγὰρ τὸ λοιπὸν εἰσόμεσθα μὲν θεοῖς
εἴκειν, μαθησόμεσθα δ' Ἀτρείδας σέβειν.
ἄρχοντές εἰσιν, ὥσθ' ὑπεικτέον. τί μήν[1];
καὶ γὰρ τὰ δεινὰ καὶ τὰ καρτερώτατα
τιμαῖς ὑπείκει· τοῦτο μὲν νιφοστιβεῖς 670
χειμῶνες ἐκχωροῦσιν εὐκάρπῳ θέρει·
ἐξίσταται δὲ νυκτὸς αἰανὴς κύκλος
τῇ λευκοπώλῳ φέγγος ἡμέρᾳ φλέγειν·
δεινῶν τ' ἄημα πνευμάτων ἐκοίμισε
στένοντα πόντον· ἐν δ' ὁ παγκρατὴς ὕπνος
λύει πεδήσας, οὐδ' ἀεὶ λαβὼν ἔχει.
ἡμεῖς δὲ πῶς οὐ γνωσόμεσθα σωφρονεῖν;
ἔγωγ'·[2] ἐπίσταμαι γὰρ ἀρτίως ὅτι
ὅ τ' ἐχθρὸς ἡμῖν ἐς τοσόνδ' ἐχθαρτέος,
ὡς καὶ φιλήσων αὖθις, ἔς τε τὸν φίλον 680
τοσαῦθ' ὑπουργῶν ὠφελεῖν βουλήσομαι,
ὡς αἰὲν οὐ μενοῦντα· τοῖς πολλοῖσι γὰρ
βροτῶν ἄπιστός ἐσθ' ἑταιρείας λιμήν.
ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ μὲν τούτοισιν εὖ σχήσει· σὺ δὲ
ἔσω θεοῖς ἐλθοῦσα διὰ τάχους, γύναι,
εὔχου τελεῖσθαι τοὐμὸν ὧν ἐρᾷ κέαρ.
ὑμεῖς δ', ἑταῖροι, ταὐτὰ τῇδέ μοι τάδε
τιμᾶτε, Τεύκρῳ τ', ἢν μόλῃ, σημήνατε
μέλειν μὲν ἡμῶν, εὐνοεῖν δ' ὑμῖν ἅμα.
ἐγὼ γὰρ εἶμ' ἐκεῖσ' ὅποι πορευτέον· 690

[1] τί μή MSS., Herwerden corr.
[2] ἐγὼ δ' ἐπίσταμαι MSS., Blaydes corr.

From Hector, my arch-enemy, to this hour,
No favour from Achaeans have I won.
So true the word familiar in men's mouths,
A foe's gifts are no gifts and profit not.
Henceforward I shall know to yield to Heaven,
And school myself the Atridae to respect.
They are our rulers and obey we must;
How otherwise? Dread potencies and powers
Submit to law. Thus winter snow-bestrown
Gives place to opulent summer. Night's dim orb
Is put to flight when Dawn with her white steeds
Kindles the day-beams; and the wind's fierce breath
Can lay the storm and lull the moaning deep.
E'en thus all-conquering sleep holds not for ever
Whom he has bound, and must relax his grasp.
And we, shall we not likewise learn to yield?
I most of all; for I have learnt, though late,
This rule, to hate an enemy as one
Who may become a friend, and serve a friend
As knowing that his friendship may not last.
An unsafe anchorage to most men proves
The bond of friendship. As for present needs
All shall be well. Woman, go thou within
And pray the gods that all my heart's desires
May find their consummation to the full.
And ye, my comrades, see that ye respect,
No less than she, my wishes; and enjoin
On Teucer, when he comes, to care for me,
And show good will to you, my friends, withal.
For I am going whither I am bound.

ὑμεῖς δ' ἃ φράζω δρᾶτε, καὶ τάχ' ἄν μ' ἴσως
πύθοισθε, κεἰ νῦν δυστυχῶ, σεσωσμένον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔφριξ' ἔρωτι, περιχαρὴς δ' ἀνεπτόμαν. στρ.
ἰὼ ἰὼ Πὰν Πάν,
ὦ Πὰν Πὰν ἁλίπλαγκτε, Κυλλανίας χιονοκτύπου
πετραίας ἀπὸ δειράδος φάνηθ', ὦ
θεῶν χοροποί' ἄναξ, ὅπως μοι
Νύσια Κνώσι' ὀρχήματ' αὐτοδαῆ ξυνὼν ἰάψῃς· 700
νῦν γὰρ ἐμοὶ μέλει χορεῦσαι.
Ἰκαρίων δ' ὑπὲρ πελαγέων μολὼν ἄναξ Ἀπόλλων
ὁ Δάλιος εὔγνωστος
ἐμοὶ ξυνείη διὰ παντὸς εὔφρων.

ἔλυσεν αἰνὸν ἄχος ἀπ' ὀμμάτων Ἄρης. ἀντ.
ἰὼ ἰώ, νῦν αὖ,
νῦν, ὦ Ζεῦ, πάρα λευκὸν εὐάμερον πελάσαι φάος
θοᾶν ὠκυάλων νεῶν, ὅτ' Αἴας 710
λαθίπονος πάλιν, θεῶν δ' αὖ
πάνθυτα θέσμι' ἐξήνυσ' εὐνομίᾳ σέβων μεγίστᾳ.
πάνθ' ὁ μέγας χρόνος μαραίνει,
κοὐδὲν ἀναύδατον φατίσαιμ' ἄν, εὖτέ γ' ἐξ ἀέλπτων
Αἴας μετανεγνώσθη
θυμοῦ τ'[1] Ἀτρείδαις μεγάλων τε νεικέων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἄνδρες φίλοι, τὸ πρῶτον ἀγγεῖλαι θέλω·
Τεῦκρος πάρεστιν ἄρτι Μυσίων ἀπὸ 720
κρημνῶν· μέσον δὲ προσμολὼν στρατήγιον
κυδάζεται τοῖς πᾶσιν Ἀργείοις ὁμοῦ.
στείχοντα γὰρ πρόσωθεν αὐτὸν ἐν κύκλῳ

[1] θυμόν τ' or θυμόν MSS., Hermann corr.

Do ye my bidding, and perchance, though now
I suffer, ye may hear of my release. [*Exit* AJAX.

CHORUS

I thrill with rapture, all my heart upsprings! (*Str.*)
Pan, Pan, O Pan, appear.
Come to us o'er the sea, sea-rover, leaving
The ridges of Cyllenè's driven snow,
Come to us, hand in hand blithe dances weaving,
Thou leader of the dance in heaven; show
Of Nysa and of Cnosos measures rare,
For in my rapture I the dance would share.
Come, and upon his footsteps swiftly follow,
Winging thy way across the Icarian main,
Show thy bright presence, Delos' own Apollo,
God of my life, thou healer of all pain!

(*Ant.*)

Grim Ares from mine eyes the cloud of sadness
Has lifted; now the radiant Dawn anew,
Angel of light, and harbinger of gladness,
Visits our ships that swiftly cleave the blue.
O joy, when Ajax has forgot once more
His woe, and turns the godhead to adore!
Due rites he pays with contrite heart and lowly.
O all-devouring time, what miracles
Thou workest! lo, his feud forgotten wholly,
Ajax at peace with the Atridae dwells.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Teucer is here—that, friends, is my first news—
Back from the Mysian highlands newly come.
But as he neared headquarters in mid camp,
He was beset with universal shouts
Of obloquy; they spied him from afar,

μαθόντες ἀμφέστησαν, εἶτ᾽ ὀνείδεσιν
ἤρασσον ἔνθεν κἄνθεν οὔτις ἔσθ᾽ ὃς οὔ,
τὸν τοῦ μανέντος κἀπιβουλευτοῦ στρατοῦ
ξύναιμον ἀποκαλοῦντες, ὡς οὐκ ἀρκέσοι
τὸ μὴ οὐ πέτροισι πᾶς καταξανθεὶς θανεῖν·
ὥστ᾽ εἰς τοσοῦτον ἦλθον ὥστε καὶ χεροῖν
κολεῶν ἐρυστὰ διεπεραιώθη ξίφη. 730
λήγει δ᾽ ἔρις δραμοῦσα τοῦ προσωτάτω
ἀνδρῶν γερόντων ἐν ξυναλλαγῇ λόγου.
ἀλλ᾽ ἡμὶν Αἴας ποῦ ᾽στιν, ὡς φράσω τάδε;
τοῖς κυρίοις γὰρ πάντα χρὴ δηλοῦν λόγον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἔνδον, ἀλλὰ φροῦδος ἀρτίως, νέας
βουλὰς νέοισιν ἐγκαταζεύξας τρόποις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἰοὺ ἰού·
βραδεῖαν ἡμᾶς ἆρ᾽ ὁ τήνδε τὴν ὁδὸν
πέμπων ἔπεμψεν ἢ ᾽φάνην ἐγὼ βραδύς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ᾽ ἐστὶ χρείας τῆσδ᾽ ὑπεσπανισμένον; 740

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τὸν ἄνδρ᾽ ἀπηύδα Τεῦκρος ἔνδοθεν στέγης
μὴ ᾽ξω παρήκειν, πρὶν παρὼν αὐτὸς τύχῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οἴχεταί τοι, πρὸς τὸ κέρδιστον τραπεὶς
γνώμης, θεοῖσιν ὡς καταλλαχθῇ χόλου.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ταῦτ᾽ ἐστὶ τἄπη μωρίας πολλῆς πλέα,
εἴπερ τι Κάλχας εὖ φρονῶν μαντεύεται.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῖον; τί δ᾽ εἰδὼς τοῦδε πράγματος πάρει; [1]

[1] πέρι MSS., Schneidewin corr.

And crowding round him as he nearer came,
Rained on him taunts from this side and from that,
Railed at the kinsman of the crazy wretch,
Plotter of mischief 'gainst the host—"To die
By stoning, mauled and mangled, is thy doom;
Think not to 'scape it, villain," so they cried.
It came to such a pass that swords were drawn
And brandished; then the riot, having run
To the very verge of bloodshed, was allayed
By intervention of the elder men.
But where is Ajax? Him I fain would tell;
'Tis meet your lords should know whate'er befell.

CHORUS

He is not within; but now he went abroad,
Yoking some new resolve to his new mood.

MESSENGER

Alack, alack!
Too late then on this errand was I sent,
Or I, a laggard, have arrived too late.

CHORUS

What pressing business has been slackly done?

MESSENGER

Teucer enjoined his brother should not forth,
Or quit his tent till he himself should come.

CHORUS

Well, he is gone, and with the best resolve
To make his peace with heaven.

MESSENGER

Folly sheer,
If there be sense in Calchas' prophecy.

CHORUS

What prophecy? what knowest thou thereof?

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τοσοῦτον οἶδα καὶ παρὼν ἐτύγχανον.
ἐκ γὰρ συνέδρου καὶ τυραννικοῦ κύκλου
Κάλχας μεταστὰς οἶος Ἀτρειδῶν δίχα, 750
εἰς χεῖρα Τεύκρου δεξιὰν φιλοφρόνως
θεὶς εἶπε κἀπέσκηψε, παντοίᾳ τέχνῃ
εἶρξαι κατ᾽ ἦμαρ τοὐμφανὲς τὸ νῦν τόδε
Αἴανθ᾽ ὑπὸ σκηναῖσι μηδ᾽ ἀφέντ᾽ ἐᾶν,
εἰ ζῶντ᾽ ἐκεῖνον εἰσιδεῖν θέλοι ποτέ.
ἐλᾷ γὰρ αὐτὸν τῇδε θἠμέρᾳ μόνῃ
δίας Ἀθάνας μῆνις, ὡς ἔφη λέγων.
τὰ γὰρ περισσὰ κἀνόνητα σώματα
πίπτειν βαρείαις πρὸς θεῶν δυσπραξίαις
ἔφασχ᾽ ὁ μάντις, ὅστις ἀνθρώπου φύσιν 760
βλαστὼν ἔπειτα μὴ κατ᾽ ἄνθρωπον φρονῇ.
κεῖνος δ᾽ ἀπ᾽ οἴκων εὐθὺς ἐξορμώμενος
ἄνους καλῶς λέγοντος ηὑρέθη πατρός.
ὁ μὲν γὰρ αὐτὸν ἐννέπει· τέκνον, δόρει
βούλου κρατεῖν μέν, σὺν θεῷ δ᾽ ἀεὶ κρατεῖν.
ὁ δ᾽ ὑψικόμπως κἀφρόνως ἠμείψατο·
πάτερ, θεοῖς μὲν κἂν ὁ μηδὲν ὢν ὁμοῦ
κράτος κατακτήσαιτ᾽· ἐγὼ δὲ καὶ δίχα
κείνων πέποιθα τοῦτ᾽ ἐπισπάσειν κλέος.
τοσόνδ᾽ ἐκόμπει μῦθον. εἶτα δεύτερον 770
δίας Ἀθάνας, ἡνίκ᾽ ὀτρύνουσά νιν
ηὐδᾶτ᾽ ἐπ᾽ ἐχθροῖς χεῖρα φοινίαν τρέπειν,
τότ᾽ ἀντιφωνεῖ δεινὸν ἄρρητόν τ᾽ ἔπος·
ἄνασσα, τοῖς ἄλλοισιν Ἀργείων πέλας
ἵστω, καθ᾽ ἡμᾶς δ᾽ οὔποτ᾽ ἐκρήξει μάχη.
τοιοῖσδέ τοι λόγοισιν ἀστεργῆ θεᾶς
ἐκτήσατ᾽ ὀργήν, οὐ κατ᾽ ἄνθρωπον φρονῶν.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴπερ ἔστι τῇδε θἠμέρᾳ, τάχ᾽ ἂν

MESSENGER

Thus much I know, for I was there. The seer
Leaving the council of assembled chiefs,
From the Atridae drew aside and laid
His right hand lovingly in Teucer's hand,
And spake and charged him straitly by all means,
For this one day whose light yet shines, to keep
Ajax within his tent nor let him forth,
If he would see him still a living man.
"Only to-day," said Calchas, "will the wrath
Of dread Athena vex him, and no more.
O'erweening mortals waxing fat with pride
Fall in their folly, smitten by the gods
With dire disaster" (so the prophet spake),
"Whene'er a mortal born to man's estate
Exalts himself in thoughts too high for man.
Thus Ajax, e'en when first he left his home,
In folly spurned his father's monishments—
'Seek victory, my son' (so warned the sire),
'But seek it ever with the help of heaven.'
He in his wilful arrogance, replied,
'Father, with gods to aid, a man of naught
Might well prevail, but I without their help.'
Such was his haughty boast. A second time,
To Queen Athena, as she spurred him on
To turn his reeking hand upon his foes,
He spake a blasphemous, outrageous word,
'Queen, stand beside the other Greeks; where I
Am posted, fear not that our ranks will break.'
Such vaunting words drew on him the dire wrath
Of the goddess—pride too high for mortal man.

γενοίμεθ' αὐτοῦ σὺν θεῷ σωτήριοι.
τοσαῦθ' ὁ μάντις εἶφ'· ὁ δ' εὐθὺς ἐξ ἕδρας **780**
πέμπει με σοὶ φέροντα τάσδ' ἐπιστολὰς
Τεῦκρος φυλάσσειν. εἰ δ' ἀπεστερήμεθα,
οὐκ ἔστιν ἁνὴρ κεῖνος, εἰ Κάλχας σοφός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ δαΐα Τέκμησσα, δύσμορον γένος,
ὅρα μολοῦσα τόνδ' ὁποῖ' ἔπη θροεῖ·
ξυρεῖ γὰρ ἐν χρῷ τοῦτο μὴ χαίρειν τινά.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τί μ' αὖ τάλαιναν, ἀρτίως πεπαυμένην
κακῶν ἀτρύτων, ἐξ ἕδρας ἀνίστατε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τοῦδ' εἰσάκουε τἀνδρός, ὡς ἥκει φέρων
Αἴαντος ἡμῖν πρᾶξιν ἣν ἤλγησ' ἐγώ. **790**

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἴμοι, τί φής, ἄνθρωπε; μῶν ὀλώλαμεν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν πρᾶξιν, Αἴαντος δ' ὅτι,
θυραῖος εἴπερ ἐστίν, οὐ θαρσῶ πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

καὶ μὴν θυραῖος, ὥστε μ' ὠδίνειν τί φής.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐκεῖνον εἴργειν Τεῦκρος ἐξεφίεται
σκηνῆς ὕπαυλον μηδ' ἀφιέναι μόνον.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ποῦ δ' ἐστὶ Τεῦκρος, κἀπὶ τῷ λέγει τάδε;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

πάρεστ' ἐκεῖνος ἄρτι· τήνδε δ' ἔξοδον
ὀλεθρίαν Αἴαντος ἐλπίζει φέρειν.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἴμοι τάλαινα, τοῦ ποτ' ἀνθρώπων μαθών; **800**

But if he can survive this day, perchance
With God's good aid we may avail to save him."
So spake the seer, and Teucer straightway rose
And sent me with these mandates. Have I failed,
Ajax is doomed, or Calchas is no seer.

CHORUS

Ill-starred Tecmessa, born to woe, come forth,
And hearken to this messenger, whose words
That touch us to the quick brook no delay.

Enter TECMESSA.

TECMESSA

Why break my rest and trouble me again,
Relieved awhile from woes that have no end?

CHORUS

List to this man—the tidings he has brought
Of Ajax' fortunes, filling me with grief.

TECMESSA

What is thy news, man? Say, are we undone?

MESSENGER

I know not of thy fortunes, only this—
If Ajax is abroad, I augur ill.

TECMESSA

Alas! he is. How thy words chill my soul!

MESSENGER

Teucer's injunction is to keep him close
Indoors, nor let him go abroad alone.

TECMESSA

And where is Teucer? Wherefore speaks he thus?

MESSENGER

He hath returned but lately and forbodes
Grave jeopardy, if Ajax goes abroad.

TECMESSA

Ah woe is me! Who warned him of this peril?

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τοῦ Θεστορείου μάντεως, καθ' ἡμέραν
τὴν νῦν, ὅτ' αὐτῷ θάνατον ἢ βίον φέρει.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἲ 'γώ, φίλοι, πρόστητ' ἀναγκαίας τύχης,
καὶ σπεύσαθ', οἱ μὲν Τεῦκρον ἐν τάχει μολεῖν,
οἱ δ' ἑσπέρους ἀγκῶνας, οἱ δ' ἀντηλίους
ζητεῖτ' ἰόντες τἀνδρὸς ἔξοδον κακήν.
ἔγνωκα γὰρ δὴ φωτὸς ἠπατημένη
καὶ τῆς παλαιᾶς χάριτος ἐκβεβλημένη.
οἴμοι, τί δράσω, τέκνον; οὐχ ἱδρυτέον·
ἀλλ' εἶμι κἀγὼ κεῖσ' ὅποιπερ ἂν σθένω. 810
χωρῶμεν, ἐγκονῶμεν, οὐχ ἕδρας ἀκμὴ
σῴζειν θέλοντας ἄνδρα γ' ὃς σπεύδῃ θανεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρεῖν ἕτοιμος, κοὐ λόγῳ δείξω μόνον·
τάχος γὰρ ἔργου καὶ ποδῶν ἅμ' ἕψεται,

ΑΙΑΣ

ὁ μὲν σφαγεὺς ἕστηκεν ᾗ τομώτατος
γένοιτ' ἄν, εἴ τῳ καὶ λογίζεσθαι σχολή·
δῶρον μὲν ἀνδρὸς Ἕκτορος ξένων ἐμοὶ
μάλιστα μισηθέντος ἐχθίστου θ' ὁρᾶν·
πέπηγε δ' ἐν γῇ πολεμίᾳ τῇ Τρῳάδι,
σιδηροβρῶτι θηγάνῃ νεηκονής· 820
ἔπηξα δ' αὐτὸν εὖ περιστείλας ἐγώ,
εὐνούστατον τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ διὰ τάχους θανεῖν.
οὕτω μὲν εὐσκευοῦμεν· ἐκ δὲ τῶνδέ μοι
σὺ πρῶτος, ὦ Ζεῦ, καὶ γὰρ εἰκός, ἄρκεσον.
αἰτήσομαι δέ σ' οὐ μακρὸν γέρας λαχεῖν.
πέμψον τιν' ἡμῖν ἄγγελον, κακὴν φάτιν

MESSENGER

The prophet, son of Thestor, but to-day,
When in the scales for him hang life and death.

TECMESSA

Help, friends, protect me from the impending doom!
Speed, some to hasten Teucer on his way,
Some to the western creeks and some to those
That front the morn; pursue his ill-starred track.
I see too well my lord hath cheated me,
Withdrawn the favour that long time was mine.
Ah me! What shall I do, my child? No time
To sit with folded hands; I too will go,
So far as this weak frame allows, in search.
Up, quick, to work! no moment must be lost,
If we would save a man who hastes to death.

CHORUS

Ready am I; not words alone shall prove,
But speed of act and foot, my readiness. [*Exeunt.*

[AJAX *alone on the sea-shore, planting his sword in the ground.*]

AJAX

The slayer standeth where his stroke is sure;
If I have time to muse thus curiously.
The gift of Hector erst my foeman-friend,
The man most hateful to my soul and sight;
Now fixed in foemen's land, the land of Troy;
Fresh edged upon the iron-fretting stone,
Here have I planted it and set it fast,
A friend to help me to a speedy death.
My part is done; for what remains, O Zeus,
First I invoke thine aid; and claim my due;
'Tis no excessive boon I shall demand.
I pray thee send some messenger to bear

Τεύκρῳ φέροντα, πρῶτος ὥς με βαστάσῃ
πεπτῶτα τῷδε περὶ νεορράντῳ ξίφει,
καὶ μὴ πρὸς ἐχθρῶν του κατοπτευθεὶς πάρος
ῥιφθῶ κυσὶν πρόβλητος οἰωνοῖς θ' ἕλωρ. 830
τοσαῦτά σ', ὦ Ζεῦ, προστρέπω, καλῶ δ' ἅμα
πομπαῖον Ἑρμῆν χθόνιον εὖ με κοιμίσαι,
ξὺν ἀσφαδάστῳ καὶ ταχεῖ πηδήματι
πλευρὰν διαρρήξαντα τῷδε φασγάνῳ.
καλῶ δ' ἀρωγοὺς τὰς ἀεί τε παρθένους
ἀεί θ' ὁρώσας πάντα τὰν βροτοῖς πάθη,
σεμνὰς Ἐρινῦς τανύποδας, μαθεῖν ἐμὲ
πρὸς τῶν Ἀτρειδῶν ὡς διόλλυμαι τάλας,
καί σφας κακοὺς κάκιστα καὶ πανωλέθρους
ξυναρπάσειαν, ὥσπερ εἰσορῶσ' ἐμὲ 840
[αὐτοσφαγῆ πίπτοντα, τὼς αὐτοσφαγεῖς
πρὸς τῶν φιλίστων ἐκγόνων ὀλοίατο].[1]
ἴτ', ὦ ταχεῖαι ποίνιμοί τ' Ἐρινύες,
γεύεσθε, μὴ φείδεσθε πανδήμου στρατοῦ·
σὺ δ', ὦ τὸν αἰπὺν οὐρανὸν διφρηλατῶν
Ἥλιε, πατρῴαν τὴν ἐμὴν ὅταν χθόνα
ἴδῃς, ἐπισχὼν χρυσόνωτον ἡνίαν
ἄγγειλον ἄτας τὰς ἐμὰς μόρον τ' ἐμὸν
γέροντι πατρὶ τῇ τε δυστήνῳ τροφῷ.
ἦ που τάλαινα, τήνδ' ὅταν κλύῃ φάτιν, 850
ἥσει μέγαν κωκυτὸν ἐν πάσῃ πόλει.
ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔργον ταῦτα θρηνεῖσθαι μάτην,
ἀλλ' ἀρκτέον τὸ πρᾶγμα σὺν τάχει τινί.
ὦ Θάνατε Θάνατε, νῦν μ' ἐπίσκεψαι μολών.
καίτοι σὲ μὲν κἀκεῖ προσαυδήσω ξυνών.
σὲ δ', ὦ φαεννῆς ἡμέρας τὸ νῦν σέλας,
καὶ τὸν διφρευτὴν Ἥλιον προσεννέπω,

[1] Rejected by Hermann, etc.

To Teucer the sad tale, that he may come
To lift me where I lie a bleeding corpse,
Fallen on this gory sword, lest I be first
Discovered by some enemy and cast forth,
A prey to dogs and birds. Thus much, O Zeus,
I crave of thee; and Hermes I invoke,
Born guide of spirits to the nether world,
To lay me soft to rest at one swift gasp,
Without a struggle, when into my side
I plunge this sword. Ye too I call to aid,
Maidens immortal, with immortal eyes
Beholding all the many woes of man,
Swift-footed hounds of vengeance, mark ye well
How by the Atridae I am all undone.
Swoop on them, Furies, blight and blast them both
In utter ruin, as they see me now!
On, ye Avengers, glut your maw, spare not,
Let ruin seize the whole Achaean host!
And thou whose chariot climbs the steep of heaven,
When in thy course thou see'st my father-land,
Draw in thy gold-bedizened rein and tell
My aged sire and mother of their son,
His sorrows and his end. Poor mother! when
She hears the tale, her piercing wail will ring
Through all the city. But how profitless
These idle lamentations and delay!
With such despatch as may be let's to work.
O Death, Death, Death, draw nigh and look on me—
Yet there below I shall have time enow
To converse face to face with Death. But thee,
O bright effulgence of this radiant day,
On thee, the Sun-god charioteer, I call

πανύστατον δὴ κοὔποτ' αὖθις ὕστερον.
ὦ φέγγος, ὦ γῆς ἱερὸν οἰκείας πέδον
Σαλαμῖνος, ὦ πατρῷον ἑστίας βάθρον 860
κλειναί τ' Ἀθῆναι καὶ τὸ σύντροφον γένος
κρῆναί τε ποταμοί θ' οἵδε, καὶ τὰ Τρωϊκὰ
πεδία προσαυδῶ, χαίρετ', ὦ τροφῆς ἐμοί·
τοῦθ' ὑμὶν Αἴας τοὔπος ὕστατον θροεῖ,
τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἐν Ἅιδου τοῖς κάτω μυθήσομαι.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α'

πόνος πόνῳ πόνον φέρει.
πᾷ πᾷ
πᾷ γὰρ οὐκ ἔβαν ἐγώ;
κοὐδεὶς ἐπίσταταί με συμμαθεῖν[1] τόπος.
ἰδού. 870
δοῦπον αὖ κλύω τινά.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ β'

ἡμῶν γε ναὸς κοινόπλουν ὁμιλίαν.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α'

τί οὖν δή;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ β'

πᾶν ἐστίβηται πλευρὸν ἕσπερον νεῶν

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α'

ἔχεις οὖν;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ β'

πόνου γε πλῆθος, κοὐδὲν εἰς ὄψιν πλέον.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α'

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ τὴν ἀφ' ἡλίου βολῶν
κέλευθον ἀνὴρ οὐδαμοῦ δηλοῖ φανείς.

[1] The Greek is obscure and probably corrupt. Jebb suggests, but does not print σφε συνναίειν.

For the last time and never more again.
O light! O sacred soil of mine own land,
My Salamis! my home, my ancestral hearth!
O far-famed Athens, race akin to mine,
Ye Trojan springs and streams, ye plains of Troy,
Farewell, ye nurses of my fame, farewell!
This is the last word Ajax speaks to you.
Henceforth he talks in Hades with the dead.
[*He falls upon his sword.*

Re-enter CHORUS.

SEMI-CHORUS 1

Toil, toil, and toil on toil!
Where have my steps not roamed, and yet,
No place that hath a secret for my ear.[1]
Hist! hist! what sound was that?

SEMI-CHORUS 2

'Tis we, thy mates.

SEMI-CHORUS 1

What cheer, mates?

SEMI-CHORUS 2

All westward of the fleet we've ranged and found

SEMI-CHORUS 1

Found, say you!

SEMI-CHORUS 2

Of moil enow, of what we sought no trace.

SEMI-CHORUS 1

No better luck to the eastward; on the road
That fronts the sunrise not a trace of him.

[1] Or, 'No spot can tell me of his presence there.'

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς ἂν δῆτά μοι, τίς ἂν φιλοπόνων *στρ.* 880
ἁλιαδᾶν ἔχων ἀΰπνους ἄγρας,
ἢ τίς Ὀλυμπιάδων θεᾶν ἢ ῥυτῶν
Βοσπορίων ποταμῶν, τὸν ὠμόθυμον
εἴ ποθι πλαζόμενον λεύσσων
ἀπύοι; σχέτλια γὰρ
ἐμέ γε τὸν μακρῶν ἀλάταν πόνων
οὐρίῳ μὴ πελάσαι δρόμῳ,
ἀλλ' ἀμενηνὸν ἄνδρα μὴ λεύσσειν ὅπου. 890

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίνος βοὴ πάραυλος ἐξέβη νάπους;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰὼ τλήμων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τὴν δουρίληπτον δύσμορον νύμφην ὁρῶ
Τέκμησσαν, οἴκτῳ τῷδε συγκεκραμένην.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ᾤχωκ', ὄλωλα, διαπεπόρθημαι, φίλοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

Αἴας ὅδ' ἡμῖν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγὴς
κεῖται, κρυφαίῳ φασγάνῳ περιπτυχής.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὤμοι ἐμῶν νόστων· 900
ὤμοι, κατέπεφνες, ἄναξ,
τόνδε συνναύταν, τάλας·
ὦ ταλαίφρων γύναι·

CHORUS

O that some toiling fisher by the bay, (*Str.*)
Dragging his nets all night,
Some Oread from Olympus' height,
Or nymph who haunts the tides of Bosporus,
Might spy the wanderer on his wayward way
And bring the tale to us.
Hard lot is ours who tack
To east, to west, and find no track,
Ne'er in our luckless course descry
The derelict nor come anigh.
(*They hear a cry in the covert.*)

TECMESSA

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

Whose was that cry from out the covert's fringe?

TECMESSA

Me miserable!

CHORUS

My hapless mistress, Ajax' spear-won bride,
Tecmessa, whelmed in anguish I behold.

TECMESSA

I'm lost, undone, of all bereft, my friends.

CHORUS

What aileth thee?

TECMESSA

Here lies our Ajax, newly slain, impaled
Upon his sword, new planted in the ground.

CHORUS

O for my hope of return!
O my chief, thou hast slain
Me thy shipmate! my heart
Bleeds for thee, lady forlorn.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ὡς ὧδε τοῦδ' ἔχοντος αἰάζειν πάρα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίνος ποτ' ἆρ' ἔπραξε χειρὶ δύσμορος;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

αὐτὸς πρὸς αὑτοῦ, δῆλον· ἐν γάρ οἱ χθονὶ
πηκτὸν τόδ' ἔγχος περιπετὲς κατηγορεῖ. 910

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὤμοι ἐμᾶς ἄτας, οἷος ἄρ' αἱμάχθης, ἄφαρκτος
    φίλων·
ἐγὼ δ' ὁ πάντα κωφός, ὁ πάντ' ἄϊδρις, κατ-
    ημέλησα. πᾷ πᾷ
κεῖται ὁ δυστράπελος, δυσώνυμος Αἴας;

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὔτοι θεατός· ἀλλά νιν περιπτυχεῖ
φάρει καλύψω τῷδε παμπήδην, ἐπεὶ
οὐδεὶς ἄν, ὅστις καὶ φίλος, τλαίη βλέπειν
φυσῶντ' ἄνω πρὸς ῥῖνας ἔκ τε φοινίας
πληγῆς μελανθὲν αἷμ' ἀπ' οἰκείας σφαγῆς. 920
οἴμοι, τί δράσω; τίς σε βαστάσει φίλων;
ποῦ Τεῦκρος; ὡς ἀκμαῖ' ἄν, εἰ βαίη, μόλοι,
πεπτῶτ' ἀδελφὸν τόνδε συγκαθαρμόσαι.
ὦ δύσμορ' Αἴας, οἷος ὢν οἵως ἔχεις,
ὡς καὶ παρ' ἐχθροῖς ἄξιος θρήνων τυχεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔμελλες, τάλας, ἔμελλες χρόνῳ   ἀντ.
στερεόφρων ἄρ' ἐξανύσσειν κακὰν
μοῖραν ἀπειρεσίων πόνων. τοιά μοι 930
πάννυχα καὶ φαέθοντ' ἀνεστέναζες
ὠμόφρων ἐχθοδόπ' Ἀτρείδαις

TECMESSA

Thus lies he overthrown; 'tis ours to wail.

CHORUS

By whose hand did he thus procure his death?

TECMESSA

By his own hand, 'tis manifest; the sword
Set in the ground, on which he fell, is proof.

CHORUS

Out on my blindness! All alone
Unwatched of friends he bled to death!
And I saw naught, heard naught, recked naught of
thee!
Where lies he, Ajax, the self-willed,
The unbending, luckless as his name?

TECMESSA

No eye shall look on him; this robe around
Shall lap him and enshroud from head to foot.
For none who knew him, not his dearest friend,
Could bear to see him, as the dark blood spurts
Up through his nostrils from the self-wrought wound.
What shall I do? What friend shall lift him up?
Where, where is Teucer? Timely would he come,
If come he might, to raise him and lay out
His brother's corse. Ah me! How high thou stood'st,
My Ajax, and how low thou liest here!
A sight to melt to tears e'en foemen's eyes!

CHORUS

Ah woeful hero, 'twas thy fate, (*Ant.*)
With that unyielding soul of thine,
In endless misery to decline,
And reach the goal of ruin, soon or late.
I knew it as I heard thee eve and morn
Against the Atridae vent
Thy passionate complaint,

οὐλίῳ σὺν πάθει.
μέγας ἄρ' ἦν ἐκεῖνος ἄρχων χρόνος
πημάτων, ἦμος ἀριστόχειρ
_ ⏑́ ⏑ _ ὅπλων ἔκειτ' ἀγὼν πέρι.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρεῖ πρὸς ἧπαρ, οἶδα, γενναία δύη.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδέν σ' ἀπιστῶ καὶ δὶς οἰμῶξαι, γύναι, 940
τοιοῦδ' ἀποβλαφθεῖσαν ἀρτίως φίλου.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

σοὶ μὲν δοκεῖν ταῦτ' ἔστ', ἐμοὶ δ' ἄγαν φρονεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ξυναυδῶ.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἴμοι, τέκνον, πρὸς οἷα δουλείας ζυγὰ
χωροῦμεν, οἷοι νῷν ἐφεστᾶσιν σκοποί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὤμοι, ἀναλγήτων
δισσῶν ἐθρόησας ἄναυδ'
ἔργ'[1] 'Ατρειδᾶν τῷδ' ἄχει.
ἀλλ' ἀπείργοι θεός.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οὐκ ἂν τάδ' ἔστη τῇδε μὴ θεῶν μέτα. 950

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγαν ὑπερβριθὲς γὰρ[2] ἄχθος ἤνυσαν.

[1] ἄναυδον ἔργου MSS., Hermann corr.
[2] Elmsley adds γὰρ.

A bitter cry of proud disdain and scorn.
Aye, then began my woes
When first arose
The contest who those arms could claim
As guerdon for the first in warlike fame.

TECMESSA

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

The anguish, well I know it,
Pierces to thy true heart.

TECMESSA

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

No marvel thou shouldst wail and wail again
Bereft so lately and of one so loved.

TECMESSA

The woe I feel thou canst in part conceive.

CHORUS

'Tis true.

TECMESSA

Alas, my child, to what hard yoke
Of bondage must we come, so merciless
The taskmasters set over thee and me!

CHORUS

The Atridae, ruthless pair,
And their grim deeds ineffable
Thy boding soul prefigures. God avert it!

TECMESSA

Save by God's will we were not in this case.

CHORUS

They have laid on us a load too hard to bear.

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

τοιόνδε μέντοι Ζηνὸς ἡ δεινὴ θεὸς
Παλλὰς φυτεύει πῆμ' Ὀδυσσέως χάριν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ ῥα κελαινώπαν θυμὸν ἐφυβρίζει πολύτλας ἀνήρ,
γελᾷ δὲ τοῖσδε μαινομένοις ἄχεσιν πολὺν γέλωτα,
φεῦ φεῦ,
ξύν τε διπλοῖ βασιλῆς κλύοντες Ἀτρεῖδαι. 960

ΤΕΚΜΗΣΣΑ

οἱ δ' οὖν γελώντων κἀπιχαιρόντων κακοῖς
τοῖς τοῦδ'· ἴσως τοι, κεἰ βλέποντα μὴ 'πόθουν,
θανόντ' ἂν οἰμώξειαν ἐν χρείᾳ δορός.
οἱ γὰρ κακοὶ γνώμαισι τἀγαθὸν χεροῖν
ἔχοντες οὐκ ἴσασι, πρίν τις ἐκβάλῃ.
ἐμοὶ πικρὸς τέθνηκεν ἢ κείνοις γλυκύς,
αὑτῷ δὲ τερπνός· ὧν γὰρ ἠράσθη τυχεῖν
ἐκτήσαθ' αὑτῷ, θάνατον ὅνπερ ἤθελεν.
τί δῆτα τοῦδ' ἐπεγγελῷεν ἂν κάτα;
θεοῖς τέθνηκεν οὗτος, οὐ κείνοισιν, οὔ. 970
πρὸς ταῦτ' Ὀδυσσεὺς ἐν κενοῖς ὑβριζέτω.
Αἴας γὰρ αὐτοῖς οὐκέτ' ἐστίν, ἀλλ' ἐμοὶ
λιπὼν ἀνίας καὶ γόους διοίχεται.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ἰώ μοί μοι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σίγησον· αὐδὴν γὰρ δοκῶ Τεύκρου κλύειν
βοῶντος ἄτης τῆσδ' ἐπίσκοπον μέλος.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ὦ φίλτατ' Αἴας, ὦ ξύναιμον ὄμμ' ἐμοί,
ἆρ' ἠμπόληκας, ὥσπερ ἡ φάτις κρατεῖ;

TECMESSA

Yet such the plague wherewith the daughter dire
Of Zeus afflicts us for Odysseus' sake.

CHORUS

Yea, how the patient hero must exult
In his dark soul and mock
With fiendish laughter at our frenzied grief;
And the two chiefs withal,
The Atridae, when they learn his fate.

TECMESSA

Well, let them laugh and mock at Ajax fall'n.
It may be, though they missed him not in life,
When comes the stress of war they'll mourn him dead.
Men of mean judgment know not the good thing
They have and hold till they have squandered it.
He by his death more sorrow gave to me
Than joy to them; to himself 'twas pure content,
For all he yearned to attain he won himself—
Death that he chose. Then wherefore scoff at him?
The gods were authors of his death, not they.
So let Odysseus, if it please him, vent
Vain taunts; for them there is no Ajax more,
And dying he has left me naught but woe.

TEUCER

Woe, woe is me!

CHORUS

Hist, hist! methinks 'tis Teucer's voice I hear,
That woeful strain of mourning at our loss.

Enter TEUCER.

TEUCER

Beloved Ajax, dearest of my kin,
Did fame not lie then? hast thou fared thus ill?

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄλωλεν ἀνήρ, Τεῦκρε, τοῦτ᾽ ἐπίστασο.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ὤμοι βαρείας ἆρα τῆς ἐμῆς τύχης. 980

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὡς ὧδ᾽ ἐχόντων

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ὢ τάλας ἐγώ, τάλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πάρα στενάζειν.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ὢ περισπερχὲς πάθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄγαν γε, Τεῦκρε.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

φεῦ τάλας· τί γὰρ τέκνον
τὸ τοῦδε, ποῦ μοι γῆς κυρεῖ τῆς Τρῳάδος;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μόνος παρὰ σκηναῖσιν.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

οὐχ ὅσον τάχος
δῆτ᾽ αὐτὸν ἄξεις δεῦρο, μή τις ὡς κενῆς
σκύμνον λεαίνης δυσμενῶν ἀναρπάσῃ;
ἴθ᾽, ἐγκόνει, σύγκαμνε· τοῖς θανοῦσί τοι
φιλοῦσι πάντες κειμένοις ἐπεγγελᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἔτι ζῶν, Τεῦκρε, τοῦδέ σοι μέλειν 990
ἐφίεθ᾽ ἀνὴρ κεῖνος, ὥσπερ οὖν μέλει.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ὢ τῶν ἁπάντων δὴ θεαμάτων ἐμοὶ
ἄλγιστον ὧν προσεῖδον ὀφθαλμοῖς ἐγώ,

CHORUS

He hath perished, Teucer, and report spake true.

TEUCER

Then woe is me for my most grievous loss.

CHORUS

And since 'tis thus—

TEUCER

Alas for me, alas!

CHORUS

The hour for mourning—

TEUCER

O sharp pang of pain!

CHORUS

Is come, O Teucer, as thou say'st.

TEUCER

Ay me!

But his son—where in Troy-land bides he now?

CHORUS

Alone beside the tent.

TEUCER

Then bring him quickly,

Lest of our foemen one should snatch him up,

As from a lioness forlorn her cub.

Go quick, bestir thyself. 'Tis the world's way

To flout and triumph o'er the prostrate dead.

[*Exit* TECMESSA.

CHORUS

Yea, while he yet lived Ajax left to thee,

Teucer, this child, to tend him, as thou dost.

TEUCER

O saddest sight of all I ever saw,

O bitterest of all paths I ever trod,

ὁδός θ' ὁδῶν πασῶν ἀνιάσασα δὴ
μάλιστα τοὐμὸν σπλάγχνον, ἣν δὴ νῦν ἔβην.
ὦ φίλτατ' Αἴας, τὸν σὸν ὡς ἐπῃσθόμην
μόρον διώκων κἀξιχνοσκοπούμενος.
ὀξεῖα γάρ σου βάξις ὡς θεοῦ τινος
διῆλθ' Ἀχαιοὺς πάντας ὡς οἴχει θανών.
ἁγὼ κλύων δύστηνος ἐκποδὼν μὲν ὢν 1000
ὑπεστέναζον, νῦν δ' ὁρῶν ἀπόλλυμαι.
οἴμοι.
ἴθ', ἐκκάλυψον, ὡς ἴδω τὸ πᾶν κακόν.
ὦ δυσθέατον ὄμμα καὶ τόλμης πικρᾶς,
ὅσας ἀνίας μοι κατασπείρας φθίνεις.
ποῖ γὰρ μολεῖν μοι δυνατόν, εἰς ποίους βροτούς,
τοῖς σοῖς ἀρήξαντ' ἐν πόνοισι μηδαμοῦ;
ἦ πού με[1] Τελαμών, σὸς πατὴρ ἐμός θ' ἅμα,
δέξαιτ' ἂν εὐπρόσωπος ἵλεώς τ' ἴσως
χωροῦντ' ἄνευ σοῦ. πῶς γὰρ οὔχ; ὅτῳ πάρα 1010
μηδ' εὐτυχοῦντι μηδὲν ἥδιον γελᾶν.
οὗτος τί κρύψει; ποῖον οὐκ ἐρεῖ κακὸν
τὸν ἐκ δορὸς γεγῶτα πολεμίου νόθον,
τὸν δειλίᾳ προδόντα καὶ κακανδρίᾳ
σέ, φίλτατ' Αἴας, ἢ δόλοισιν, ὡς τὰ σὰ
κράτη θανόντος καὶ δόμους νέμοιμι σούς.
τοιαῦτ' ἀνὴρ δύσοργος, ἐν γήρᾳ βαρύς,
ἐρεῖ, πρὸς οὐδὲν εἰς ἔριν θυμούμενος.
τέλος δ' ἀπωστὸς γῆς ἀπορριφθήσομαι,
δοῦλος λόγοισιν ἀντ' ἐλευθέρου φανείς. 1020
τοιαῦτα μὲν κατ' οἶκον· ἐν Τροίᾳ δέ μοι
πολλοὶ μὲν ἐχθροί, παῦρα δ' ὠφελήσιμα.
καὶ ταῦτα πάντα σοῦ θανόντος ηὑρόμην.
οἴμοι, τί δράσω; πῶς σ' ἀποσπάσω πικροῦ

[1] MSS. omit με, added by Kuster.

The path that led me hither, Ajax loved,
My best-loved Ajax! when I learnt thy fate,
E'en as I tracked in desperate haste thy steps;
For a swift rumour, like a voice from heaven,
Ran through the host that thou wert dead and
gone.
I heard it and I moaned in spirit afar,
But now the sight strikes death into my soul.
O woe!
Come, lift the searcloth; let me see the worst.
O bleeding form, O agonising sight!
How brave, how rash, how cruel in thy death;
Thy death, what seed of misery for me!
Where can I turn, what race of men will house me,
The wretch who failed to help thee in thy woes?
How Telamon, thy sire and mine withal,
Will beam upon me (can'st not picture him?)
When I return without thee! Telamon
Who in his hours of fortune never smiles!
Will he refrain? Will he not curse and ban
The bastard of his spear-won concubine,
The wretch who like a coward and poltroon
Forsook thee, dearest Ajax, or conspired
To hold thy realm and halls when thou wert dead?
Thus will he rave, the choleric, soured old man,
Ready to pick a quarrel for a straw.
And in the end I shall be banned, defamed,
Rejected, branded—*No free man, a slave.*
Such cheer at home awaits me, and at Troy
My foes are many and my friends to seek.
Thus by thy death I've profited! Ah me!
How tear thee from this cruel glittering blade,

τοῦδ' αἰόλου κνώδοντος, ὦ τάλας, ὑφ' οὗ
φονέως ἄρ' ἐξέπνευσας; εἶδες ὡς χρόνῳ
ἔμελλέ σ' Ἕκτωρ καὶ θανὼν ἀποφθίσειν;
σκέψασθε, πρὸς θεῶν, τὴν τύχην δυοῖν βροτοῖν.
Ἕκτωρ μέν, ᾧ δὴ τοῦδ' ἐδωρήθη πάρα,
ζωστῆρι πρισθεὶς ἱππικῶν ἐξ ἀντύγων 1030
ἐκνάπτετ' αἰέν, ἔστ' ἀπέψυξεν βίον·
οὗτος δ' ἐκείνου τήνδε δωρεὰν ἔχων
πρὸς τοῦδ' ὄλωλε θανασίμῳ πεσήματι.
ἆρ' οὐκ Ἐρινὺς τοῦτ' ἐχάλκευσεν ξίφος
κἀκεῖνον Ἅιδης, δημιουργὸς ἄγριος;
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ ταῦτα καὶ τὰ πάντ' ἀεὶ
φάσκοιμ' ἂν ἀνθρώποισι μηχανᾶν θεούς·
ὅτῳ δὲ μὴ τάδ' ἐστὶν ἐν γνώμῃ φίλα,
κεῖνός τ' ἐκεῖνα στεργέτω κἀγὼ τάδε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μὴ τεῖνε μακράν, ἀλλ' ὅπως κρύψεις τάφῳ 1040
φράζου τὸν ἄνδρα χὤ τι μυθήσει τάχα.
βλέπω γὰρ ἐχθρὸν φῶτα, καὶ τάχ' ἂν κακοῖς
γελῶν ἃ δὴ κακοῦργος ἐξίκοιτ' ἀνήρ.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

τίς δ' ἐστὶν ὅντιν' ἄνδρα προσλεύσσεις στρατοῦ;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Μενέλαος, ᾧ δὴ τόνδε πλοῦν ἐστείλαμεν.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ὁρῶ· μαθεῖν γὰρ ἐγγὺς ὢν οὐ δυσπετής.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

οὗτος, σὲ φωνῶ τόνδε τὸν νεκρὸν χεροῖν
μὴ συγκομίζειν, ἀλλ' ἐᾶν ὅπως ἔχει.

That stands arraigned thine executioner?
See'st thou how Hector dead and turned to dust
Was fated in the end to be thy death?
Look on the fortunes of the two, I pray ye:
Hector, who by the very belt he wore,
A gift from Ajax, lashed to the car-rail
Was dragged and mangled till his ghost expired;[1]
And this the sword whose murderous edge transfixed
The side of Ajax—this was Hector's gift.
Say, was it not some Fury forged this blade,
Was not that hellish girdle wove by Death?
I hold, for my part, these and all things else
The gods contrive for mortals. But may be
Some disapprove my creed; let such an one
Cling to his own belief, as I to mine.

CHORUS

Abridge thy large discourse; think how to lay
The dead man in his grave and what thy plea
Shall be anon; I see a foe approach.
Perchance he comes with mocking of our grief,
As miscreants use.

TEUCER

What captain dost thou see?

CHORUS

Menelaus, he at whose behest we sailed.

TEUCER

'Tis he, not hard to recognise thus near.

Enter MENELAUS

MENELAUS

Stop, sirrah, bear no hand in raising up
The corse, I charge thee; leave it where it lies.

[1] Homer knows nothing of the belt and it is the *dead* Hector who is dragged round the tomb of Patroclus.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

τίνος χάριν τοσόνδ' ἀνήλωσας λόγον;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

δοκοῦντ' ἐμοί, δοκοῦντα δ' ὃς κραίνει στρατοῦ. 1050

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

οὔκουν ἂν εἴποις ἥντιν' αἰτίαν προθείς;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ὁθούνεκ' αὐτὸν ἐλπίσαντες οἴκοθεν
ἄγειν Ἀχαιοῖς ξύμμαχόν τε καὶ φίλον,
ἐξηύρομεν ζητοῦντες ἐχθίω Φρυγῶν·
ὅστις στρατῷ ξύμπαντι βουλεύσας φόνον
νύκτωρ ἐπεστράτευσεν, ὡς ἕλοι δόρει·
κεἰ μὴ θεῶν τις τήνδε πεῖραν ἔσβεσεν,
ἡμεῖς μὲν ἂν τήνδ' ἣν ὅδ' εἴληχεν τύχην
θανόντες ἂν προυκείμεθ' αἰσχίστῳ μόρῳ,
οὗτος δ' ἂν ἔζη. νῦν δ' ἐνήλλαξεν θεὸς 1060
τὴν τοῦδ' ὕβριν πρὸς μῆλα καὶ ποίμνας πεσεῖν.
ὧν εἵνεκ' αὐτὸν οὔτις ἔστ' ἀνὴρ σθένων
τοσοῦτον ὥστε σῶμα τυμβεῦσαι τάφῳ,
ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ χλωρὰν ψάμαθον ἐκβεβλημένος
ὄρνισι φορβὴ παραλίοις γενήσεται.
πρὸς ταῦτα μηδὲν δεινὸν ἐξάρῃς μένος.
εἰ γὰρ βλέποντος μὴ 'δυνήθημεν κρατεῖν,
πάντως θανόντος γ' ἄρξομεν, κἂν μὴ θέλῃς,
χερσὶν παρευθύνοντες· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπου
λόγων γ' ἀκοῦσαι ζῶν ποτ' ἠθέλησ' ἐμῶν. 1070
καίτοι κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ὄντα δημότην
μηδὲν δικαιοῦν τῶν ἐφεστώτων κλύειν.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' οὔτ' ἂν ἐν πόλει νόμοι καλῶς
φέροιντ' ἄν, ἔνθα μὴ καθεστήκῃ δέος,
οὔτ' ἂν στρατός γε σωφρόνως ἄρχοιτ' ἔτι,
μηδὲν φόβου πρόβλημα μηδ' αἰδοῦς ἔχων.

TEUCER

Wherefore dost waste thy breath in these proud
words?

MENELAUS

Such is my will and the great general's will.

TEUCER

On what pretence? wilt please to tell us that?

MENELAUS

Hear then. We thought to bring from Salamis
For Greeks a friend and firm ally, but found him
On trial worse than any Phrygian foe;
Who plotted death and sallied forth by night
'Gainst the whole host, to slay us with the spear;
And had some god not intervened to foil
This enterprise, his fate had now been ours,
To perish by an ignominious death,
While he had now been living. But a god
Turned his blind malice on the flocks and herds.
Thus hath he done, and no man shall prevail
By might to lay his body in the tomb.
He shall be cast forth on the yellow sands
To feed the carrion birds that haunt the beach.
Rage not nor bluster as thou hear'st, for we,
E'en if we could not master him alive,
In any case will lord it o'er him dead,
Rule him and discipline, in thy despite,
By force—my words he ne'er would heed, alive.
Yet 'tis a mark of villainy when one
Of the common deigns not to obey his lords.
For in a State that hath no dread of law
The laws can never prosper and prevail,
Nor could an armèd force be disciplined
Lacking the guard of awe and reverence.

ἀλλ' ἄνδρα χρή, κἂν σῶμα γεννήσῃ μέγα,
δοκεῖν πεσεῖν ἂν κἂν ἀπὸ σμικροῦ κακοῦ.
δέος γὰρ ᾧ πρόσεστιν αἰσχύνη θ' ὁμοῦ,
σωτηρίαν ἔχοντα τόνδ' ἐπίστασο· 1080
ὅπου δ' ὑβρίζειν δρᾶν θ' ἃ βούλεται παρῇ,
ταύτην νόμιζε τὴν πόλιν χρόνῳ ποτὲ
ἐξ οὐρίων δραμοῦσαν εἰς βυθὸν πεσεῖν.
ἀλλ' ἑστάτω μοι καὶ δέος τι καίριον,
καὶ μὴ δοκῶμεν δρῶντες ἂν ἡδώμεθα
οὐκ ἀντιτίσειν αὖθις ἂν λυπώμεθα.
ἕρπει παραλλὰξ ταῦτα. πρόσθεν οὗτος ἦν
αἴθων ὑβριστής, νῦν δ' ἐγὼ μέγ' αὖ φρονῶ.
καί σοι προφωνῶ τόνδε μὴ θάπτειν, ὅπως
μὴ τόνδε θάπτων αὐτὸς εἰς ταφὰς πέσῃς. 1090

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Μενέλαε, μὴ γνώμας ὑποστήσας σοφὰς
εἶτ' αὐτὸς ἐν θανοῦσιν ὑβριστὴς γένῃ.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

οὐκ ἄν ποτ', ἄνδρες, ἄνδρα θαυμάσαιμ' ἔτι,
ὃς μηδὲν ὢν γοναῖσιν εἶθ' ἁμαρτάνει,
ὅθ' οἱ δοκοῦντες εὐγενεῖς πεφυκέναι
τοιαῦθ' ἁμαρτάνουσιν ἐν λόγοις ἔπη·
ἄγ' εἴπ' ἀπ' ἀρχῆς αὖθις, ἦ σὺ φῂς ἄγειν
τόνδ' ἄνδρ' Ἀχαιοῖς δεῦρο σύμμαχον λαβών;
οὐκ αὐτὸς ἐξέπλευσεν ὡς αὑτοῦ κρατῶν;
ποῦ σὺ στρατηγεῖς τοῦδε; ποῦ δὲ σοὶ λεῶν 1100
ἔξεστ' ἀνάσσειν ὧν ὅδ' ἤγαγ' οἴκοθεν;
Σπάρτης ἀνάσσων ἦλθες, οὐχ ἡμῶν κρατῶν·
οὐδ' ἔσθ' ὅπου σοὶ τόνδε κοσμῆσαι πλέον
ἀρχῆς ἔκειτο θεσμὸς ἢ καὶ τῷδε σέ.
ὕπαρχος ἄλλων δεῦρ' ἔπλευσας, οὐχ ὅλων

Nay, though a man should tower in thews and might,
A giant o'er his fellows, let him think
Some petty stroke of fate may work his ruin.
Where dread prevails and reverence withal,
Believe me, there is safety; but the State,
Where arrogance hath licence and self-will,
Though for a while she run before the gale,
Will in the end make shipwreck and be sunk.
Dread in its proper season and degree
Must be maintained; let us not fondly dream
That we can act at will to please ourselves,
Nor pay the price of pleasure by our pains.
'Tis turn and turn; now this man lorded it
In insolence; 'tis now my hour of pride.
So I forewarn thee bury him not, lest thou
In burying shouldst dig thyself a grave.

CHORUS

Sage precepts these, my lord, and do not thou
Thyself become a scoffer of the dead.

TEUCER

Friends, I shall never marvel after this
If any baseborn fellow gives offence,
When men who pride them on their lineage
By their perverted utterance thus offend.
Repeat thy tale: thou claimest to have brought
My brother hither as a Greek ally,
Secured by thee forsooth. Sailed he not forth
As his own master, of his own free will?
Who made thee lord of him? What right hast thou
To rule the clansmen whom he brought from home?
Thou cam'st as Sparta's king, no lord of ours.
Thou hast no more prerogative or right
To govern him than he to govern thee;
Thou sailedst under orders, not as chief,

στρατηγός, ὥστ' Αἴαντος ἡγεῖσθαί ποτε.
ἀλλ' ὧνπερ ἄρχεις ἄρχε καὶ τὰ σέμν' ἔπη
κόλαζ' ἐκείνους· τόνδε δ', εἴτε μὴ σὺ φῂς
εἴθ' ἅτερος στρατηγός, εἰς ταφὰς ἐγὼ
θήσω δικαίως, οὐ τὸ σὸν δείσας στόμα. 1110
οὐ γάρ τι τῆς σῆς εἵνεκ' ἐστρατεύσατο
γυναικός, ὥσπερ οἱ πόνου πολλοῦ πλέῳ,
ἀλλ' εἵνεχ' ὅρκων οἷσιν ἦν ἐνώμοτος,
σοῦ δ' οὐδέν· οὐ γὰρ ἠξίου τοὺς μηδένας.
πρὸς ταῦτα πλείους δεῦρο κήρυκας λαβὼν
καὶ τὸν στρατηγὸν ἧκε, τοῦ δὲ σοῦ ψόφου
οὐκ ἂν στραφείην, ἕως ἂν ᾖς οἷός περ εἶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐδ' αὖ τοιαύτην γλῶσσαν ἐν κακοῖς φιλῶ·
τὰ σκληρὰ γάρ τοι, κἂν ὑπέρδικ' ᾖ, δάκνει.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ὁ τοξότης ἔοικεν οὐ σμικρὸν φρονεῖν. 1120

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ βάναυσον τὴν τέχνην ἐκτησάμην.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

μέγ' ἄν τι κομπάσειας, ἀσπίδ' εἰ λάβοις.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

κἂν ψιλὸς ἀρκέσαιμι σοί γ' ὡπλισμένῳ.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἡ γλῶσσά σου τὸν θυμὸν ὡς δεινὸν τρέφει.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ γὰρ μέγ' ἔξεστιν φρονεῖν.

And captain unto Ajax ne'er couldst be.
Go, lord it o'er thy henchmen, chasten them
With lordly pride; but this man, whether thou,
Aye, or thy brother-general forbid,
I with due rites and offices will bury
Despite thy threatenings. 'Twas not to bring back
Thy wife that Ajax joined in the campaign,
Like thy serf drudges, but to keep the oath
Whereto he had bound himself, no whit for thee;
Of underlings like thee he took no heed.
Go then and bring more heralds back with thee
And the commander; for thy noisy rant,
Whilst thou art what thou art, I care no straw.

CHORUS

This speech again mislikes me in the midst
Of woes; hard words, how just soever, wound.

MENELAUS

Methinks this archer[1] hath a captain's pride.

TEUCER

Aye, as the master of no vulgar art.

MENELAUS

How wouldst thou strut, promoted to a shield!

TEUCER

Without a shield I were a match for thee
In panoply.

MENELAUS

How valorous with thy tongue!

TEUCER

He can be bold who hath his quarrel just.

[1] 'Archer' like 'ranker' by itself is a term of reproach. In the *Iliad* Teucer is the best bowman in the Achaean host, but also a good man-at-arms.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
δίκαια γὰρ τόνδ᾽ εὐτυχεῖν κτείναντά με;
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
κτείναντα; δεινόν γ᾽ εἶπας, εἰ καὶ ζῇς θανών.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
θεὸς γὰρ ἐκσῴζει με, τῷδε δ᾽ οἴχομαι.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
μή νυν ἀτίμα θεούς, θεοῖς σεσωσμένος.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἂν ψέξαιμι δαιμόνων νόμους; 1130
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
εἰ τοὺς θανόντας οὐκ ἐᾷς θάπτειν παρών.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
τούς γ᾽ αὐτὸς αὑτοῦ πολεμίους. οὐ γὰρ καλόν.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
ἦ σοὶ γὰρ Αἴας πολέμιος προὔστη ποτέ;
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
μισοῦντ᾽ ἐμίσει· καὶ σὺ τοῦτ᾽ ἠπίστασο.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
κλέπτης γὰρ αὐτοῦ ψηφοποιὸς ηὑρέθης.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ἐν τοῖς δικασταῖς, κοὐκ ἐμοί, τόδ᾽ ἐσφάλη.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
πόλλ᾽ ἂν κακῶς λάθρᾳ σὺ κλέψειας κακά.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
τοῦτ᾽ εἰς ἀνίαν τοὔπος ἔρχεταί τινι.
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
οὐ μᾶλλον, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἢ λυπήσομεν.
ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ
ἕν σοι φράσω· τόνδ᾽ ἐστὶν οὐχὶ θαπτέον. 1140
ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ
ἀλλ᾽ ἀντακούσει τοῦτον ὡς τεθάψεται.

MENELAUS

Justice quotha, to exalt my murderer?

TEUCER

Murdered, and yet thou livest! that is strange!

MENELAUS

Heaven saved me; in intention I was slain.

TEUCER

If the gods saved thee, sin not 'gainst the gods.

MENELAUS

I! could I e'er abuse the laws of Heaven?

TEUCER

Yea, if thou com'st to stop the burial.

MENELAUS

Of mine own foes; to bury them were sin.

TEUCER

Was Ajax e'en thine enemy in the field?

MENELAUS

He loathed me, as I him, thou knowest well.

TEUCER

Aye, thou hadst robbed him by suborning votes.

MENELAUS

'Twas by the judges he was cast, not me.

TEUCER

A fair face thou canst put on foulest frauds.

MENELAUS

Someone I know will suffer for that word.

TEUCER

He who provoked is like to suffer more.

MENELAUS

One word more; he shall not be burièd.

TEUCER

One word in answer; buried he shall be.

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἤδη ποτ' εἶδον ἄνδρ' ἐγὼ γλώσσῃ θρασὺν
ναύτας ἐφορμήσαντα χειμῶνος τὸ πλεῖν,
ᾧ φθέγμ' ἂν οὐκ ἂν ηὗρες, ἡνίκ' ἐν κακῷ
χειμῶνος εἴχετ', ἀλλ' ὑφ' εἵματος κρυφεὶς
πατεῖν παρεῖχε τῷ θέλοντι ναυτίλων.
οὕτω δὲ καὶ σὲ καὶ τὸ σὸν λάβρον στόμα
σμικροῦ νέφους τάχ' ἄν τις ἐκπνεύσας μέγας
χειμὼν κατασβέσειε τὴν πολλὴν βοήν.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ δέ γ' ἄνδρ' ὄπωπα μωρίας πλέων, 1150
ὃς ἐν κακοῖς ὕβριζε τοῖσι τῶν πέλας.
κᾆτ' αὐτὸν εἰσιδών τις ἐμφερὴς ἐμοὶ
ὀργήν θ' ὅμοιος εἶπε τοιοῦτον λόγον·
ὤνθρωπε, μὴ δρᾶ τοὺς τεθνηκότας κακῶς·
εἰ γὰρ ποήσεις, ἴσθι πημανούμενος.
τοιαῦτ' ἄνολβον ἄνδρ' ἐνουθέτει παρών.
ὁρῶ δέ τοί νιν, κἄστιν, ὡς ἐμοὶ δοκεῖ,
οὐδείς ποτ' ἄλλος ἢ σύ. μῶν ᾐνιξάμην;

ΜΕΝΕΛΑΟΣ

ἄπειμι· καὶ γὰρ αἰσχρόν, εἰ πύθοιτό τις
λόγοις κολάζειν ᾧ βιάζεσθαι πάρα. 1160

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ἄφερπέ νυν· κἀμοὶ γὰρ αἴσχιστον κλύειν
ἀνδρὸς ματαίου φλαῦρ' ἔπη μυθουμένου.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔσται μεγάλης ἔριδός τις ἀγών.
ἀλλ' ὡς δύνασαι, Τεῦκρε, ταχύνας
σπεῦσον κοίλην κάπετόν τιν' ἰδεῖν
τῷδ', ἔνθα βροτοῖς τὸν ἀείμνηστον
τάφον εὐρώεντα καθέξει.

MENELAUS

Once did I see a braggart, bold of tongue,
Who had pressed his crew to sail in time of storm,
But when the storm was on him he was mum—
Lay like a dead log muffled in his cloak,
And let the sailors trample him at will.
E'en so with thee and thy unbridled tongue.
Perchance a mighty hurricane may rise,
Sprung from a cloud no bigger than a hand,
Swoop down on thee and quench thy blustering.

TEUCER

Once too I knew a fool, a silly fool,
Who triumphed at his neighbour's woes and mocked;
And then it chanced that one, a man like me
In looks and character, addressed him thus:
Man, do not evil to the dead, for if
Thou doest evil, thou wilt surely rue it.
So to his face he chid that silly fool.
I see that wight before me, and methinks
'Tis none but thou. Can'st read my riddle plain?

MENELAUS

I go, for 'twould disgrace me, were it known
That I, with power to act, chastised with words.

TEUCER

Begone then! 'twere for me a worse disgrace
To listen to a bragster's idle prate. [*Exit* MENELAUS.

CHORUS

Soon a mortal strife will come.
Seek a hollow grave, and haste,
Teucer, with what speed thou may'st,
To prepare the mouldering tomb,
Where the warrior shall lie,
Deathless in men's memory.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐς αὐτὸν καιρὸν οἵδε πλησίοι
πάρεισιν ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε παῖς τε καὶ γυνή,
τάφον περιστελοῦντε δυστήνου νεκροῦ. 1170
ὦ παῖ, πρόσελθε δεῦρο καὶ σταθεὶς πέλας
ἱκέτης ἔφαψαι πατρός, ὅς σ' ἐγείνατο.
θάκει δὲ προστρόπαιος ἐν χεροῖν ἔχων
κόμας ἐμὰς καὶ τῆσδε καὶ σαυτοῦ τρίτου,
ἱκτήριον θησαυρόν. εἰ δέ τις στρατοῦ
βίᾳ σ' ἀποσπάσειε τοῦδε τοῦ νεκροῦ,
κακὸς κακῶς ἄθαπτος ἐκπέσοι χθονός,
γένους ἅπαντος ῥίζαν ἐξημημένος,
αὔτως ὅπωσπερ τόνδ' ἐγὼ τέμνω πλόκον.
ἔχ' αὐτόν, ὦ παῖ, καὶ φύλασσε, μηδέ σε 1180
κινησάτω τις, ἀλλὰ προσπεσὼν ἔχου.
ὑμεῖς τε μὴ γυναῖκες ἀντ' ἀνδρῶν πέλας
παρέστατ', ἀλλ' ἀρήγετ', ἔστ' ἐγὼ μολὼν
τάφου μεληθῶ τῷδε, κἂν μηδεὶς ἐᾷ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

τίς ἄρα νέατος ἐς πότε λήξει πολυπλάγκτων
ἐτέων ἀριθμός,
τὰν ἄπαυστον αἰὲν ἐμοὶ δορυσσοήτων
μόχθων ἄταν ἐπάγων
ἀν τὰν εὐρώδεα Τρωΐαν,[1] 1190
δύστανον ὄνειδος Ἑλλάνων;

ἀντ. α'

ὄφελε πρότερον αἰθέρα δῦναι μέγαν ἢ τὸν
πολύκοινον Ἅιδαν
κεῖνος ἀνήρ, ὃς στυγερῶν ἔδειξεν ὅπλων
Ἕλλασιν κοινὸν Ἄρη.

[1] ἀνὰ τὰν εὐρώδη Τροίαν MSS., Ahrens corr.

Enter TECMESSA *and* CHILD.

TEUCER

Lo! in good time I see his child and wife
Draw near to tend the hero's obsequies.
Come hither, child, and take thy place beside him
And lay, in suppliant guise, thy hand in his,
And kneel as one who hath taken sanctuary,
With locks of hair as offering in thine hand—
Mine, hers, and thine,—all-potent means of grace.
Then if by violence any of the host
Should drag thee from the dead man, be his lot
To perish banned, cast forth without a grave,
Cut off with kith and kindred, root and branch,
Even as I cut this lock from off my head.
Take it and keep it, child; let no man move thee.
Kneel thou, and clasp in close embrace the dead.
And ye, his comrades, stand not idly by
As women mourners; quit yourselves as men
In his defence, till I have made a grave
To bury him, though all the world forbid.

[*Exit* TEUCER.

CHORUS (*Str.* 1)

When shall the score be told, the sum of the endless years?
Weary am I of camps and tramps and the hurtling of spears.
Hither and thither I roam o'er the windswept Trojan plain,
Shame and reproach for Greece, for Grecians trouble and pain.

(*Ant.* 1)

Would he had sunk to hell, or vanished in ether afar,
Who first admonished the Greeks to league themselves for the war—

ἰὼ πόνοι πρόγονοι πόνων·
κεῖνος γὰρ ἔπερσεν ἀνθρώπους.

ἐκεῖνος οὔτε στεφάνων — στρ. β'
οὔτε βαθεῖαν κυλίκων — 1200
νεῖμεν ἐμοὶ τέρψιν ὁμιλεῖν,
οὔτε γλυκὺν αὐλῶν ὄτοβον,
δύσμορος, οὔτ' ἐννυχίαν[1]
τέρψιν ἰαύειν.
ἐρώτων δ', ἐρώτων ἀπέπαυσεν, ὤμοι.
κεῖμαι δ' ἀμέριμνος οὕτως,
ἀεὶ πυκιναῖς δρόσοις
τεγγόμενος κόμας,
λυγρᾶς μνήματα Τροίας. — 1210

καὶ πρὶν μὲν αἰὲν νυχίου· — ἀντ. β'
δείματος ἦν μοι προβολὰ
καὶ βελέων θούριος Αἴας·
νῦν δ' οὗτος ἀνεῖται στυγερῷ
δαίμονι· τίς μοι, τίς ἔτ' οὖν
τέρψις ἐπέσται;
γενοίμαν ἵν' ὑλᾶεν ἔπεστι πόντου
πρόβλημ' ἁλίκλυστον, ἄκραν
ὑπὸ πλάκα Σουνίου, — 1220
τὰς ἱερὰς ὅπως
προσείποιμεν Ἀθάνας.

[1] ἐννυχίου MSS., Wolff corr.

AJAX

War, the father of toils, whence mortal sorrows began;
Yea, it was he who begat the plague and ruin of man.

Wretch! for me no garlands fine, (*Str.* 2.)
Cups o'erbrimming with red wine;
No shrill flutes didst thou assign.

Wretch! a foe to all delight.
E'en the slumbers soft of night
Thy alarms have banished quite.

And my loves, ah well-a-day!
Thou hast driven them all away;
Here I lie on the cold clay:

All alone, with none to care,
While the dank dews wet my hair.
Such, accursèd Troy, thy fare!

Erewhile Ajax, stalwart knight, (*Ant.* 2.)
Was my buckler in the fight,
Shield against the alarm of might.

Now by Fate a victim led
To the altar, he hath bled;
And for me all joy hath fled.

O that from this barren strand
Wafted to Athena's land
I on Sunium's brow might stand;

Hear the waves that round it beat
Wash the wooded headland's feet,
Sacred Athens thence to greet!

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἰδὼν ἔσπευσα τὸν στρατηλάτην
Ἀγαμέμνον' ἡμῖν δεῦρο τόνδ' ὁρμώμενον·
δῆλος δέ μοὔστὶ σκαιὸν ἐκλύσων στόμα.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὲ δὴ τὰ δεινὰ ῥήματ' ἀγγέλλουσί μοι
τλῆναι καθ' ἡμῶν ὧδ' ἀνοιμωκτὶ χανεῖν;
σέ τοι, τὸν ἐκ τῆς αἰχμαλωτίδος λέγω,
ἦ που τραφεὶς ἂν μητρὸς εὐγενοῦς ἄπο
ὑψήλ' ἐκόμπεις κἀπ' ἄκρων ὡδοιπόρεις, 1230
ὅτ' οὐδὲν ὢν τοῦ μηδὲν ἀντέστης ὕπερ,
κοὔτε στρατηγοὺς οὔτε ναυάρχους μολεῖν
ἡμᾶς Ἀχαιῶν οὐδὲ σοῦ διωμόσω,
ἀλλ' αὐτὸς ἄρχων, ὡς σὺ φής, Αἴας ἔπλει.
ταῦτ' οὐκ ἀκούειν μεγάλα πρὸς δούλων κακά;
ποίου κέκραγας ἀνδρὸς ὧδ' ὑπέρφρονα;
ποῖ βάντος ἢ ποῦ στάντος οὗπερ οὐκ ἐγώ;
οὐκ ἆρ' Ἀχαιοῖς ἄνδρες εἰσὶ πλὴν ὅδε;
πικροὺς ἔοιγμεν τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὅπλων
ἀγῶνας Ἀργείοισι κηρῦξαι τότε, 1240
εἰ πανταχοῦ φανούμεθ' ἐκ Τεύκρου κακοί,
κοὐκ ἀρκέσει ποθ' ὑμὶν οὐδ' ἡσσημένοις
εἴκειν ἃ τοῖς πολλοῖσιν ἤρεσκεν κριταῖς,
ἀλλ' αἰὲν ἡμᾶς ἢ κακοῖς βαλεῖτέ που
ἢ σὺν δόλῳ κεντήσεθ' οἱ λελειμμένοι.
ἐκ τῶνδε μέντοι τῶν τρόπων οὐκ ἄν ποτε
κατάστασις γένοιτ' ἂν οὐδενὸς νόμου,
εἰ τοὺς δίκῃ νικῶντας ἐξωθήσομεν
καὶ τοὺς ὄπισθεν εἰς τὸ πρόσθεν ἄξομεν.
ἀλλ' εἰρκτέον τάδ' ἐστίν· οὐ γὰρ οἱ πλατεῖς 1250
οὐδ' εὐρύνωτοι φῶτες ἀσφαλέστατοι,

Enter TEUCER.

TEUCER

Lo I return in haste ; I saw approach
Great Agamemnon, captain of the host ;
'Tis plain he means to vent on us his spleen

Enter AGAMEMNON.

AGAMEMNON

So, Sirrah, it is thou (for thus I learn)
Hast dared to rant and curse and threaten us,
Thus far unpunished ; thou the bondmaid's son.
Ha ! had thy mother been a high-born dame,
How grand thy speech, how proud had been thy
gait,
When now, a nobody, thou championest
That thing of naught, maintaining that we kings
Had no commission, or on sea or land,
To rule the Greeks or thee, and (such thy claim)
That Ajax sailed, an independent chief.
Is this not rank presumption in a slave?
And what is he whose might thou vauntest thus?
Where did he hold his ground or lead the assault
Where I was not? Have Greeks no *man* but him?
'Twas in an evil hour we made proclaim
Of open contest for Achilles' arms,
If Teucer must denounce us as corrupt,
Whate'er the issue, and if ye reject
The adverse judgment of the major part,
But must for ever gird at us and rail,
Or plot to stab us, when ye lose your suit.
Never with tempers such as yours could law
Be firmly based, if we are called to oust
The rightful victors and promote the worse.
This must be stopped. 'Tis not the brawny, big,
Broad-shouldered men who prove the best at need ;

ἀλλ' οἱ φρονοῦντες εὖ κρατοῦσι πανταχοῦ.
μέγας δὲ πλευρὰ βοῦς ὑπὸ σμικρᾶς ὅμως
μάστιγος ὀρθὸς εἰς ὁδὸν πορεύεται.
καὶ σοὶ προσέρπον τοῦτ' ἐγὼ τὸ φάρμακον
ὁρῶ τάχ', εἰ μὴ νοῦν κατακτήσει τινά·
ὃς ἀνδρὸς οὐκέτ' ὄντος, ἀλλ' ἤδη σκιᾶς,
θαρσῶν ὑβρίζεις κἀξελευθεροστομεῖς.
οὐ σωφρονήσεις; οὐ μαθὼν ὃς εἶ φύσιν
ἄλλον τιν' ἄξεις ἄνδρα δεῦρ' ἐλεύθερον, 1260
ὅστις πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀντὶ σοῦ λέξει τὰ σά;
σοῦ γὰρ λέγοντος οὐκέτ' ἂν μάθοιμ' ἐγώ·
τὴν βάρβαρον γὰρ γλῶσσαν οὐκ ἐπαΐω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἴθ' ὑμὶν ἀμφοῖν νοῦς γένοιτο σωφρονεῖν·
τούτου γὰρ οὐδὲν σφῷν ἔχω λῷον φράσαι.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

φεῦ· τοῦ θανόντος ὡς ταχεῖά τις βροτοῖς
χάρις διαρρεῖ καὶ προδοῦσ' ἁλίσκεται,
εἰ σοῦ γ' ὅδ' ἀνὴρ οὐδ' ἐπὶ σμικρῶν λόγων,
Αἴας, ἔτ' ἴσχει μνῆστιν, οὗ σὺ πολλάκις
τὴν σὴν προτείνων προύκαμες ψυχὴν δόρει. 1270
ἀλλ' οἴχεται δὴ πάντα ταῦτ' ἐρριμμένα.
ὦ πολλὰ λέξας ἄρτι κἀνόητ' ἔπη,
οὐ μνημονεύεις οὐκέτ' οὐδέν, ἡνίκα
ἑρκέων ποθ' ὑμᾶς οὗτος ἐγκεκλῃμένους,
ἤδη τὸ μηδὲν ὄντας, ἐν τροπῇ δορὸς
ἐρρύσατ' ἐλθὼν μοῦνος, ἀμφὶ μὲν νεῶν
ἄκροισιν ἤδη ναυτικοῖς ἑδωλίοις
πυρὸς φλέγοντος, εἰς δὲ ναυτικὰ σκάφη
πηδῶντος ἄρδην Ἕκτορος τάφρων ὕπερ;
τίς ταῦτ' ἀπεῖρξεν; οὐχ ὅδ' ἦν ὁ δρῶν τάδε, 1280

The wise and prudent everywhere prevail.
The broad-ribbed ox is guided on his path
Down the straight furrow by a little goad.
A like corrective is in store for thee,
If thou acquire not some small sense full soon.
The man is dead, a shadow, and yet thou
Let'st thy tongue wag and waxest insolent.
Come to a sober mind; recall thy birth,
Bring hither someone else, a free-born man,
To plead thy cause before us in thy stead;
For when thou speak'st thy words convey no sense;
I understand not a barbarian tongue.

CHORUS

I would ye twain might learn sobriety;
'Tis the best counsel I can give you both.

TEUCER

Out on man's gratitude! how soon it fades,
Or proves a traitor when a friend is dead!
What memory, what tittle of regard
Hath he for thee, my Ajax, thou who oft
At peril of thy life didst toil for him?
Lost labour, cast away and all forgot!
Vain, windy orator, canst not recall
The day when ye were cooped within your lines,
Scattered, half routed and as good as lost,
How single-handed he stood forth and saved you,
Though at your ships the poop decks were ablaze,
And Hector o'er the fosse came bounding, prompt
To board them? Who averted then the rout?
The very man of whom thou sayest now,
"He did no deed I have not done myself."

ὃν οὐδαμοῦ φής, οὗ σὺ μή, βῆναι[1] ποδί;
ἆρ' ὑμὶν οὗτος ταῦτ' ἔδρασεν ἔνδικα;
χὤτ' αὖθις αὐτὸς Ἕκτορος μόνος μόνου
λαχών τε κἀκέλευστος ἦλθ' ἐναντίος,
οὐ δραπέτην τὸν κλῆρον ἐς μέσον καθείς,
ὑγρᾶς ἀρούρας βῶλον, ἀλλ' ὃς εὐλόφου
κυνῆς ἔμελλε πρῶτος ἅλμα κουφιεῖν;
ὅδ' ἦν ὁ πράσσων ταῦτα, σὺν δ' ἐγὼ παρών,
ὁ δοῦλος, οὑκ τῆς βαρβάρου μητρὸς γεγώς.
δύστηνε, ποῖ βλέπων ποτ' αὐτὰ καὶ θροεῖς; 1290
οὐκ οἶσθα σοῦ πατρὸς μὲν ὃς προὔφυ πατὴρ
ἀρχαῖον ὄντα Πέλοπα βάρβαρον Φρύγα;
Ἀτρέα δ', ὃς αὖ σ' ἔσπειρε δυσσεβέστατον,
προθέντ' ἀδελφῷ δεῖπνον οἰκείων τέκνων;
αὐτὸς δὲ μητρὸς ἐξέφυς Κρήσσης, ἐφ' ᾗ
λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἄνδρ' ὁ φιτύσας πατὴρ
ἐφῆκεν ἐλλοῖς ἰχθύσιν διαφθοράν.
τοιοῦτος ὢν τοιῷδ' ὀνειδίζεις σποράν;
ὃς ἐκ πατρὸς μέν εἰμι Τελαμῶνος γεγώς,
ὅστις στρατοῦ τὰ πρῶτ' ἀριστεύσας ἐμὴν 1300
ἴσχει ξύνευνον μητέρ', ἣ φύσει μὲν ἦν
βασίλεια, Λαομέδοντος· ἔκκριτον δέ νιν
δώρημα κείνῳ 'δωκεν Ἀλκμήνης γόνος.
ἆρ' ὧδ' ἄριστος ἐξ ἀριστέοιν δυοῖν
βλαστὼν ἂν αἰσχύνοιμι τοὺς πρὸς αἵματος,
οὓς νῦν σὺ τοιοῖσδ' ἐν πόνοισι κειμένους
ὠθεῖς ἀθάπτους, οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνει λέγων;
εὖ νυν τόδ' ἴσθι, τοῦτον εἰ βαλεῖτέ που,

[1] οὐδὲ συμβῆναι MSS., Madvig corr.

Was that no loyal service? Judge yourselves;
Or once again when he in single fight
Confronted Hector, under no constraint,
But by the lot he drew—no skulking lot,[1]
No lump of loam, but one that well he knew
Would first leap lightly from the crested helm?
Such deeds were his, and at his side was I,
This slave, of a barbarian mother born.
How canst thou prate thus idly? Look at home.
Hast thou forgotten that thine own sire's sire
Was Phrygian Pelops, a barbarian?
That Atreus who begat thee, wretch, did set
Before his brother a most impious feast,
His brother's children's flesh? That thou thyself
Com'st of a Cretan mother whom her sire
Caught with an alien slave, her paramour,
And sent to feed dumb fishes of the deep?
Thus basely born thou twit'st me with my birth!
My sire was Telamon who won the prize
As champion of the host, a peerless bride,
A princess, daughter of Laomedon,
The meed assigned him by Alcmena's son.
She was my mother. And am I, thus born
Nobly of parents both of noblest birth,
Am I to shame my kindred overthrown,
Now helpless, whelmed in utter misery,
Whom thou wouldst spurn and rob of burial rites,
Nor art ashamed to promulgate this ban?
Know this full well, where'er ye cast this man,

[1] An allusion to the story of Cresphontes who after the Dorian Conquest agreed to cast lots for his share of the Peloponnese and in order to secure the last lot, which he coveted, put a lump of clay into the urn instead of a potsherd.

βαλεῖτε χἠμᾶς τρεῖς ὁμοῦ συγκειμένους.
ἐπεὶ καλόν μοι τοῦδ' ὑπερπονουμένῳ 1310
θανεῖν προδήλως μᾶλλον ἢ τῆς σῆς ὑπὲρ
γυναικός, ἢ τοῦ σοῦ γ'[1] ὁμαίμονος λέγω;
πρὸς ταῦθ' ὅρα μὴ τοὐμόν, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ σόν·
ὡς εἴ με πημανεῖς τι, βουλήσει ποτὲ
καὶ δειλὸς εἶναι μᾶλλον ἢ 'ν ἐμοὶ θρασύς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄναξ Ὀδυσσεῦ, καιρὸν ἴσθ' ἐληλυθώς,
εἰ μὴ ξυνάψων, ἀλλὰ συλλύσων πάρει.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν, ἄνδρες; τηλόθεν γὰρ ᾐσθόμην
βοὴν Ἀτρειδῶν τῷδ' ἐπ' ἀλκίμῳ νεκρῷ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ κλύοντές ἐσμεν αἰσχίστους λόγους, 1320
ἄναξ Ὀδυσσεῦ, τοῦδ' ὑπ' ἀνδρὸς ἀρτίως;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ποίους; ἐγὼ γὰρ ἀνδρὶ συγγνώμην ἔχω
κλύοντι φλαῦρα συμβαλεῖν ἔπη κακά.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἤκουσεν αἰσχρά· δρῶν γὰρ ἦν τοιαῦτά με.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τί γάρ σ' ἔδρασεν, ὥστε καὶ βλάβην ἔχειν;

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὔ φησ' ἐάσειν τόνδε τὸν νεκρὸν ταφῆς
ἄμοιρον, ἀλλὰ πρὸς βίαν θάψειν ἐμοῦ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔξεστιν οὖν εἰπόντι τἀληθῆ φίλῳ
σοὶ μηδὲν ἧσσον ἢ πάρος ξυνηρετεῖν;[2]

[1] σοῦ θ' MSS., Bothe corr. [2] ξυνηρετμεῖν MSS., Lobeck corr.

We three, three corpses, ye will cast beside.
For me 'twere nobler before all men's eyes
To fall in his behalf than fór a wife
Of thine—or of thy brother, should I say?
Therefore bethink thee—'tis thine interest
No less than mine—if on me thou dar'st lay
A finger, thou wilt surely wish full soon
Rather to bear the brand of cowardice
Than prove thy reckless bravery on me.

Enter ODYSSEUS.

CHORUS

My lord Odysseus, thou art come in time,
If thou art here to mediate, not embroil.

ODYSSEUS

What is it, sirs? Far off I heard loud words
Of the Atridae o'er the hero's corpse.

AGAMEMNON

True, lord Odysseus; were we not provoked
By the most shameful taunts from yonder man?

ODYSSEUS

What taunts? For my part I can pardon one
Who when reviled retorts in angry words.

AGAMEMNON

I did abuse him as his acts deserved.

ODYSSEUS

Say by what action gave he just offence?

AGAMEMNON

He vows he will not leave unsepultured
The corpse, but bury it in my despite.

ODYSSEUS

May I be candid with thee as a friend
Without suspicion of my loyalty?

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

εἴπ'· ἦ γὰρ εἴην οὐκ ἂν εὖ φρονῶν, ἐπεὶ 1330
φίλον σ' ἐγὼ μέγιστον Ἀργείων νέμω.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἄκουέ νυν. τὸν ἄνδρα τόνδε πρὸς θεῶν
μὴ τλῇς ἄθαπτον ὧδ' ἀναλγήτως βαλεῖν·
μηδ' ἡ βία σε μηδαμῶς νικησάτω
τοσόνδε μισεῖν ὥστε τὴν δίκην πατεῖν.
κἀμοὶ γὰρ ἦν ποθ' οὗτος ἔχθιστος στρατοῦ,
ἐξ οὗ 'κράτησα τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὅπλων,
ἀλλ' αὐτὸν ἔμπας ὄντ' ἐγὼ τοιόνδ' ἐμοὶ
οὐκ ἀντατιμάσαιμ' ἄν, ὥστε μὴ λέγειν
ἕν' ἄνδρ' ἰδεῖν ἄριστον Ἀργείων, ὅσοι 1340
Τροίαν ἀφικόμεσθα, πλὴν Ἀχιλλέως.
ὥστ' οὐκ ἂν ἐνδίκως γ' ἀτιμάζοιτό σοι·
οὐ γάρ τι τοῦτον, ἀλλὰ τοὺς θεῶν νόμους
φθείροις ἄν. ἄνδρα δ' οὐ δίκαιον, εἰ θάνοι,
βλάπτειν τὸν ἐσθλόν, οὐδ' ἐὰν μισῶν κυρῇς.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὺ ταῦτ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, τοῦδ' ὑπερμαχεῖς ἐμοί;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔγωγ'· ἐμίσουν δ', ἡνίκ' ἦν μισεῖν καλόν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

οὐ γὰρ θανόντι καὶ προσεμβῆναί σε χρή;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

μὴ χαῖρ', Ἀτρείδη, κέρδεσιν τοῖς μὴ καλοῖς.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τόν τοι τύραννον εὐσεβεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδιον. 1350

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἀλλ' εὖ λέγουσι τοῖς φίλοις τιμὰς νέμειν.

AGAMEMNON

Surely. I am not senseless, and I count
Thee among all the Greeks my chiefest friend.

ODYSSEUS

Then hear me. O for pity's sake forbear,
Repent, and let not violence and hate
Blind thee to trample justice under foot.
I also counted him my deadliest foe
In all the army, ever since the day
When by award I won Achilles' arms;
Yet for all that, foe as he was to me,
I would not so requite his wrong with wrong
As not to own that, save Achilles, he
In all the host of Argives had no peer.
Unjustly thou wouldst thus dishonour him;
For not to him, but to the laws of heaven
Wouldst thou do wrong; and wrong it is to insult
A brave man dead, e'en if he be thy foe.

AGAMEMNON

Wilt thou, Odysseus, take his part against me?

ODYSSEUS

Yea, yet I hated him so long as hate
Was honourable.

AGAMEMNON

Why not hate him still,
And set thy heel on his dead body too?

ODYSSEUS

Delight not, son of Atreus, in ill gains.

AGAMEMNON

'Tis hard for monarchs to show piety.

ODYSSEUS

But not respect for friends who counsel well.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

κλύειν τὸν ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρα χρὴ τῶν ἐν τέλει.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

παῦσαι· κρατεῖς τοι τῶν φίλων νικώμενος.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

μέμνησ᾽ ὁποίῳ φωτὶ τὴν χάριν δίδως.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὅδ᾽ ἐχθρὸς ἀνήρ, ἀλλὰ γενναῖός ποτ᾽ ἦν.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τί ποτε ποήσεις; ἐχθρὸν ὧδ᾽ αἰδεῖ νέκυν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

νικᾷ γὰρ ἀρετή με τῆς ἔχθρας πολύ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τοιοίδε μέντοι φῶτες ἔμπληκτοι βροτῶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦ κάρτα πολλοὶ νῦν φίλοι καὖθις πικροί.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

τοιούσδ᾽ ἐπαινεῖς δῆτα σὺ κτᾶσθαι φίλους; 1360

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σκληρὰν ἐπαινεῖν οὐ φιλῶ ψυχὴν ἐγώ.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἡμᾶς σὺ δειλοὺς τῇδε θἠμέρᾳ φανεῖς.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἄνδρας μὲν οὖν Ἕλλησι πᾶσιν ἐνδίκους.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἄνωγας οὖν με τὸν νεκρὸν θάπτειν ἐᾶν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔγωγε· καὶ γὰρ αὐτὸς ἐνθάδ᾽ ἵξομαι.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἦ πάνθ᾽ ὅμοια πᾶς ἀνὴρ αὑτῷ πονεῖ.

AGAMEMNON
A true man ever heeds authority.

ODYSSEUS
Forbear: thou conquerest, yielding unto friends.

AGAMEMNON
Think to what kind of man thou showest grace.

ODYSSEUS
My foe he was, but still a noble foe.

AGAMEMNON
What wouldst thou? Honour a dead foeman's corpse?

ODYSSEUS
With me his worth outweighs his enmity.

AGAMEMNON
Such sudden change of mind we call caprice.

ODYSSEUS
Common enough the change from friend to foe.

AGAMEMNON
Dost thou commend such fickle friends as these?

ODYSSEUS
A stubborn temper I would ne'er commend.

AGAMEMNON
Thou mind'st this day to make us seem as cowards.

ODYSSEUS
Nay, as just rulers in the eyes of Greece.

AGAMEMNON
Thou bidst me then permit the burial?

ODYSSEUS
Yes, for I too shall come to need the same.

AGAMEMNON
How true the saw, each labours for himself.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τῷ γάρ με μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἢ 'μαυτῷ πονεῖν;

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

σὸν ἆρα τοὔργον, οὐκ ἐμὸν κεκλήσεται.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὡς ἂν ποήσῃς, πανταχῇ χρηστός γ' ἔσει.

ΑΓΑΜΕΜΝΩΝ

ἀλλ' εὖ γε μέντοι τοῦτ' ἐπίστασ' ὡς ἐγὼ 1370
σοὶ μὲν νέμοιμ' ἂν τῆσδε καὶ μείζω χάριν,
οὗτος δὲ κἀκεῖ κἀνθάδ' ὢν ἔμοιγ' ὁμῶς
ἔχθιστος ἔσται· σοὶ δὲ δρᾶν ἔξεσθ' ἃ χρῇς.[1]

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὅστις σ', Ὀδυσσεῦ, μὴ λέγει γνώμῃ σοφὸν
φῦναι, τοιοῦτον ὄντα, μῶρός ἐστ' ἀνήρ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ νῦν γε Τεύκρῳ τἀπὸ τοῦδ' ἀγγέλλομαι,
ὅσον τότ' ἐχθρὸς ἦ, τοσόνδ' εἶναι φίλος.
καὶ τὸν θανόντα τόνδε συνθάπτειν θέλω
καὶ ξυμπονεῖν καὶ μηδὲν ἐλλείπειν ὅσων
χρὴ τοῖς ἀρίστοις ἀνδράσιν πονεῖν βροτούς. 1380

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ἄριστ' Ὀδυσσεῦ, πάντ' ἔχω σ' ἐπαινέσαι
λόγοισι, καί μ' ἔψευσας ἐλπίδος πολύ.
τούτῳ γὰρ ὢν ἔχθιστος Ἀργείων ἀνὴρ
μόνος παρέστης χερσίν, οὐδ' ἔτλης παρὼν
θανόντι τῷδε ζῶν ἐφυβρίσαι μέγα,
ὡς ὁ στρατηγὸς οὑπιβρόντητος μολὼν
αὐτός τε χὠ ξύναιμος ἠθελησάτην
λωβητὸν αὐτὸν ἐκβαλεῖν ταφῆς ἄτερ.
τοιγάρ σφ' Ὀλύμπου τοῦδ' ὁ πρεσβεύων πατὴρ 1390

[1] χρῄ MSS., Dindorf corr.

ODYSSEUS

And who deserves my labour more than I?

AGAMEMNON

Well, let it seem thy doing, friend, not mine.

ODYSSEUS

Howe'er 'tis done, 'twill prove thee good and kind.

AGAMEMNON

To thee, my friend, of this be well assured,
I'd grant a favour greater e'en than this.
But that man, as in living so in death,
Shall have my hate. So do as pleaseth thee.

[*Exit* AGAMEMNON.

CHORUS

Whoe'er, Odysseus, having proof like this,
Denies thy wisdom is himself a fool.

ODYSSEUS

And now to Teucer, once my foe, henceforth
I proffer friendship staunch and true as was
Mine enmity; and I would ask to share
With you in obsequies and ritual
To grace his grave; no service would I stint
That man can render to the mighty dead.

TEUCER

Noblest Odysseus, I have naught but praise
For thy good words that all belie my fears.
Of all the Greeks thou wast his deadliest foe,
Yet thou alone didst dare espouse his cause,
And hadst no heart to insult this dumb cold clay,
Like yonder crack-brained chief of the host who came,
He and his brother general, with intent
To cast him forth defamed without a grave.
For that may he who rules in heaven supreme,

μνήμων τ' Ἐρινὺς καὶ τελεσφόρος Δίκη
κακοὺς κακῶς φθείρειαν, ὥσπερ ἤθελον
τὸν ἄνδρα λώβαις ἐκβαλεῖν ἀναξίως.
σὲ δ', ὦ γεραιοῦ σπέρμα Λαέρτου πατρός,
τάφου μὲν ὀκνῶ τοῦδ' ἐπιψαύειν ἐᾶν,
μὴ τῷ θανόντι τοῦτο δυσχερὲς ποιῶ·
τὰ δ' ἄλλα καὶ ξύμπρασσε, κεἴ τινα στρατοῦ
θέλεις κομίζειν, οὐδὲν ἄλγος ἕξομεν.
ἐγὼ δὲ τἄλλα πάντα πορσυνῶ· σὺ δὲ
ἀνὴρ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐσθλὸς ὢν ἐπίστασο.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἀλλ' ἤθελον μέν· εἰ δὲ μή 'στί σοι φίλον 1400
πράσσειν τάδ' ἡμᾶς, εἶμ' ἐπαινέσας τὸ σόν.

ΤΕΥΚΡΟΣ

ἅλις· ἤδη γὰρ πολὺς ἐκτέταται
χρόνος. ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν κοίλην κάπετον
χερσὶ ταχύνατε, τοὶ δ' ὑψίβατον
τρίποδ' ἀμφίπυρον λουτρῶν ὁσίων
θέσθ' ἐπίκαιρον·
μία δ' ἐκ κλισίας ἀνδρῶν ἴλη
τὸν ὑπασπίδιον κόσμον φερέτω.
παῖ, σὺ δὲ πατρός γ', ὅσον ἰσχύεις, 1410
φιλότητι θιγὼν πλευρὰς σὺν ἐμοὶ
τάσδ' ἐπικούφιζ'· ἔτι γὰρ θερμαὶ
σύριγγες ἄνω φυσῶσι μέλαν
μένος. ἀλλ' ἄγε πᾶς, φίλος ὅστις ἀνὴρ

And the Erinys who forgetteth not,
And Justice who accomplisheth the end,
Curse those accursed sinners and confound them,
E'en as they would have wronged the innocent dead.
But for thine aid in these our funeral rites,
Son of Laertes, old and honoured chief,
I must reject the service, though full loath,
Lest I should do displeasure to the dead.
In all the rest be one of us, and if
Thou wouldst invite some comrade from the camp
To join the mourning, we shall welcome him.
All else I will provide. Rest well assured,
We reckon thee a true great-hearted friend.

ODYSSEUS

Well I was fain to assist, but if your will
Consents not, I will acquiesce and go.

TEUCER

Enough: too long have we delayed.
Go some with mattock armed and spade,
Dig the grave pit speedily;
Lustral waters to supply,
Others set the cauldron high,
Piling around it faggots dry,
Let another band be sent
To fetch his harness from his tent.
Thou too, child, draw near and lay
Thy little hands on this cold clay;
Though thy help may not be much,
Thy sire shall feel thy loving touch.
Help to raise this prostrate form.
These limbs are cold, yet still the warm
Veins from the heart and wounded side
Jet forth their dark ensanguined tide.

φησὶ παρεῖναι, σούσθω, βάτω,
τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ πονῶν τῷ πάντ' ἀγαθῷ
κοὐδενί πω λῴονι θνητῶν
[Αἴαντος, ὅτ' ἦν, τότε φωνῶ].[1]

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ πολλὰ βροτοῖς ἔστιν ἰδοῦσιν
γνῶναι· πρὶν ἰδεῖν δ' οὐδεὶς μάντις
τῶν μελλόντων, ὅ τι πράξει.

[1] Rejected by Dindorf.

Haste, each who claims the name of friend,
Haste one and all the dead to tend
With service due. Since time began
There lived on earth no nobler man.

CHORUS

Wisdom still by seeing grows,
But no man the unseen knows.
Shall he fare or ill or well
Who of mortals can foretell?

ELECTRA

ARGUMENT

ORESTES, *admonished by the Delphic oracle to avenge his murdered father, sets forth for Mycenae accompanied by his aged Paedagogus and Pylades. When in sight of the palace they lay their plot. The Paedagogus is to present himself as a Phocian messenger and announce to Clytemnestra that Orestes has been killed in a chariot race at the Pythian games. Meanwhile Orestes and Pylades are to make funeral offerings at the tomb of Agamemnon and then, disguised as Phocians, to carry to the Queen a funeral urn, telling her it holds the ashes of Orestes. Clytemnestra, warned by an evil dream, sends Chrysothemis to pour a libation on the tomb. Electra meets her on the way thither and persuades her to leave these impious offerings and take instead such gifts as the two sisters can make to their father's ghost. Clytemnestra enters with a handmaid bearing fruits to be laid on the altar of Apollo. She rates Electra for being abroad without her leave, and defends her past acts against Electra's reproaches. The announcement of a messenger ends the altercation, and the Queen hears with feigned sorrow and ill-concealed joy the news of Orestes' death, and invites the messenger to accompany her to the palace,*

ARGUMENT

Chrysothemis returns from the tomb, reporting that someone has been there before her, has wreathed the mound with flowers, and left on the edge a lock of hair. Who can it be but Orestes? Electra disabuses her, repeating the messenger's sad tale, and entreats her aid in executing the resolve to slay with her own hands their unnatural mother and her paramour. Orestes joins them with Pylades and attendants bearing the funeral urn. She takes the urn in her hands and makes her moan over her lost brother. As they converse together Orestes by degrees reveals himself and discloses his purpose. With Pylades he enters the palace, and shortly a death-shriek is heard. He comes forth, and in answer to Electra replies that all is well in the house. Aegisthus is seen approaching, exultant at the report he has heard of Orestes' death. Electra confirms it, and bids him enter the palace and see with his own eyes the corpse. At his bidding the palace doors are thrown open and on a bier is seen a veiled corpse. Aegisthus lifts the face cloth and beholds the corpse of Clytemnestra with Orestes standing hard by. He knows that his fate is sealed, and is driven at the sword's point by Orestes to be slain in the hall where Agamemnon was slain. The Chorus of free Mycenean women hail the death of the usurper which ends the curse on the house of Atreus.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ
ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ
ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

AGED SERVANT OF ORESTES

ORESTES, *son of Agamemnon, the late king of Argos, and Clytemnestra*

ELECTRA, CHRYSOTHEMIS, *daughters of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra*

CLYTEMNESTRA, *Queen of Argos and Mycenae.*

AEGISTHUS, *cousin of Agamemnon, sometime paramour of Clytemnestra and now prince consort*

CHORUS OF MYCENEAN WOMEN.

SCENE: At Mycenae before the Palace of Agamemnon.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

Ὦ τοῦ στρατηγήσαντος ἐν Τροίᾳ ποτὲ
Ἀγαμέμνονος παῖ, νῦν ἐκεῖν' ἔξεστί σοι
παρόντι λεύσσειν, ὧν πρόθυμος ἦσθ' ἀεί.
τὸ γὰρ παλαιὸν Ἄργος οὑπόθεις τόδε,
τῆς οἰστροπλῆγος ἄλσος Ἰνάχου κόρης·
αὕτη δ', Ὀρέστα, τοῦ λυκοκτόνου θεοῦ
ἀγορὰ Λύκειος· οὑξ ἀριστερᾶς δ' ὅδε
Ἥρας ὁ κλεινὸς ναός· οἷ δ' ἱκάνομεν,
φάσκειν Μυκήνας τὰς πολυχρύσους ὁρᾶν   10
πολύφθορόν τε δῶμα Πελοπιδῶν τόδε,
ὅθεν σε πατρὸς ἐκ φονῶν ἐγώ ποτε
πρὸς σῆς ὁμαίμου καὶ κασιγνήτης λαβὼν
ἤνεγκα κ ἰξέσωσα κἀξεθρεψάμην
τοσόνδ' ἐς ἥβης, πατρὶ τιμωρὸν φόνου.
νῦν οὖν, Ὀρέστα καὶ σὺ φίλτατε ξένων
Πυλάδη, τί χρὴ δρᾶν ἐν τάχει βουλευτέον·

ELECTRA

Enter AGED SERVANT *with* ORESTES *and* PYLADES.

AGED SERVANT

O Child of Agamemnon, who sometime
Was Captain of the host that leaguered Troy,
'Tis thine at last to view before thee spread
The scene thy heart was set on. Yonder lies
Old Argos thou so long hast yearned to see,
Once refuge of the gadfly-driven maid,[1]
Daughter of Inachus; and, Orestes, here
The market-place from the Wolf-slayer[2] named;
There on our left is Hera's far-famed shrine;
And lo! before us, at our very feet
Thou seest Mycenae of the golden hoard,
And there the palace grim of Pelops' line,
Deep stained with murder. Thence I bore thee once
Snatched from beside thy father's bleeding corse
By kindly hands, thy sister's; rescued thus
I fostered thee till thou hadst reached the age
To be the avenger of thy father's blood.
But now, Orestes, and thou, Pylades,
Dearest of friends, the hour for you is ripe
To take resolve and that right speedily.

[1] Inachus, the river god, was the legendary founder of Argos, whither his daughter Io, changed by the jealous Hera into a cow, was driven in her wanderings.

[2] Apollo *Lukeios*, the god of light, but by folk-etymology connected with λύκος, wolf.

ὡς ἡμὶν ἤδη λαμπρὸν ἡλίου σέλας
ἑῷα κινεῖ φθέγματ᾽ ὀρνίθων σαφῆ
μέλαινά τ᾽ ἄστρων ἐκλέλοιπεν εὐφρόνη.
πρὶν οὖν τιν᾽ ἀνδρῶν ἐξοδοιπορεῖν στέγης, 20
ξυνάπτετον λόγοισιν· ὡς ἐνταῦθ᾽ ἐμέν,[1]
ἵν᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ὀκνεῖν καιρός, ἀλλ᾽ ἔργων ἀκμή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατ᾽ ἀνδρῶν προσπόλων, ὥς μοι σαφῆ
σημεῖα φαίνεις ἐσθλὸς εἰς ἡμᾶς γεγώς.
ὥσπερ γὰρ ἵππος εὐγενής, κἂν ᾖ γέρων,
ἐν τοῖσι δεινοῖς θυμὸν οὐκ ἀπώλεσεν,
ἀλλ᾽ ὀρθὸν οὖς ἵστησιν, ὡσαύτως δὲ σὺ
ἡμᾶς τ᾽ ὀτρύνεις καὐτὸς ἐν πρώτοις ἕπει.
τοιγὰρ τὰ μὲν δόξαντα δηλώσω, σὺ δὲ
ὀξεῖαν ἀκοὴν τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις διδούς, 30
εἰ μή τι καιροῦ τυγχάνω, μεθάρμοσον.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἡνίχ᾽ ἱκόμην τὸ Πυθικὸν
μαντεῖον, ὡς μάθοιμ᾽ ὅτῳ τρόπῳ πατρὶ
δίκας ἀροίμην τῶν φονευσάντων πάρα,
χρῇ μοι τοιαῦθ᾽ ὁ Φοῖβος ὧν πεύσει τάχα·
ἄσκευον αὐτὸν ἀσπίδων τε καὶ στρατοῦ
δόλοισι κλέψαι χειρὸς ἐνδίκους σφαγάς.
ὅτ᾽ οὖν τοιόνδε χρησμὸν εἰσηκούσαμεν,
σὺ μὲν μολών, ὅταν σε καιρὸς εἰσάγῃ,
δόμων ἔσω τῶνδ᾽, ἴσθι πᾶν τὸ δρώμενον, 40
ὅπως ἂν εἰδὼς ἡμὶν ἀγγείλῃς σαφῆ.
οὐ γάρ σε μὴ γήρᾳ τε καὶ χρόνῳ μακρῷ
γνῶσ᾽, οὐδ᾽ ὑποπτεύσουσιν ὧδ᾽ ἠνθισμένον.
λόγῳ δὲ χρῶ τοιῷδ᾽, ὅτι ξένος μὲν εἶ
Φωκέως παρ᾽ ἀνδρὸς Φανοτέως ἥκων· ὁ γὰρ

[1] ἐμέν cannot stand. Hartung's ὡς, ἵν᾽ ἕσταμεν, οὐκ ἔστ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ὀκνεῖν καιρός is the most probable emendation.

For lo, already the bright beams of day
Waken to melody the pipe of birds,
And black night with her glimmering stars has
waned.
So ere a soul be stirring in the streets
Confer together and resolve yourselves.
No time for longer pause; now must we act.

ORESTES

Dearest of followers, how well thou show'st
The constant service of thy loyalty!
For as the high-bred steed, though he be old,
Pricks up his ears and champs the bit for joy
When battle rages, even so dost thou
Both urge us on and follow with the first.
Therefore I will unfold our plans, and thou
Note well my words, and if in aught I seem
To miss the mark, admonish and correct.
Know then that when I left thee to consult
The Pythian oracle and learn how best
To execute just vengeance for my sire
On those that slew him, Phoebus answered thus:
Trust not to shields or armed hosts, but steal
The chance thyself the avenging blow to deal.
Since then the Pythian god hath thus advised,
Go thou and watch thine opportunity
To enter in the palace and observe
What happens there and bring us full report.
And fear not to be recognised; long years
And thy white locks, the blossom of old age,
Have changed thee wholly. Forge some specious tale:
Thou art a Phocian stranger hither sent
By Phanoteus their doughtiest ally.

μέγιστος αὐτοῖς τυγχάνει δορυξένων.
ἄγγελλε δ' ὅρκον[1] προστιθεὶς ὁθούνεκα
τέθνηκ' Ὀρέστης ἐξ ἀναγκαίας τύχης,
ἄθλοισι Πυθικοῖσιν ἐκ τροχηλάτων
δίφρων κυλισθείς· ὧδ' ὁ μῦθος ἑστάτω. 50
ἡμεῖς δὲ πατρὸς τύμβον, ὡς ἐφίετο,
λοιβαῖσι πρῶτον καὶ καρατόμοις χλιδαῖς
στέψαντες εἶτ' ἄψορρον ἥξομεν πάλιν,
τύπωμα χαλκόπλευρον ἠρμένοι χεροῖν,
ὃ καὶ σὺ θάμνοις οἶσθά που κεκρυμμένον,
ὅπως λόγῳ κλέπτοντες ἡδεῖαν φάτιν
φέρωμεν αὐτοῖς, τοὐμὸν ὡς ἔρρει δέμας
φλογιστὸν ἤδη καὶ κατηνθρακωμένον.
τί γάρ με λυπεῖ τοῦθ', ὅταν λόγῳ θανὼν
ἔργοισι σωθῶ κἀξενέγκωμαι κλέος; 60
δοκῶ μέν, οὐδὲν ῥῆμα σὺν κέρδει κακόν.
ἤδη γὰρ εἶδον πολλάκις καὶ τοὺς σοφοὺς
λόγῳ μάτην θνῄσκοντας· εἶθ', ὅταν δόμους
ἔλθωσιν αὖθις, ἐκτετίμηνται πλέον·
ὡς κἄμ' ἐπαυχῶ τῆσδε τῆς φήμης ἄπο
δεδορκότ' ἐχθροῖς ἄστρον ὣς λάμψειν ἔτι.
ἀλλ', ὦ πατρῴα γῆ θεοί τ' ἐγχώριοι,
δέξασθέ μ' εὐτυχοῦντα ταῖσδε ταῖς ὁδοῖς,
σύ τ', ὦ πατρῷον δῶμα· σοῦ γὰρ ἔρχομαι
δίκῃ καθαρτὴς πρὸς θεῶν ὡρμημένος· 70
καὶ μή μ' ἄτιμον τῆσδ' ἀποστείλητε γῆς,
ἀλλ' ἀρχέπλουτον καὶ καταστάτην δόμων.
εἴρηκα μέν νυν ταῦτα· σοὶ δ' ἤδη, γέρον,
τὸ σὸν μελέσθω βάντι φρουρῆσαι χρέος.
νὼ δ' ἔξιμεν· καιρὸς γάρ, ὅσπερ ἀνδράσιν
μέγιστος ἔργου παντός ἐστ' ἐπιστάτης.

[1] ὅρκῳ MSS., Reiske corr.

Report, confirming with an oath the tale,
How that Orestes by a fatal chance
Hath perished, from his speeding chariot hurled
(So let thy tale run) at the Pythian games.
And we meanwhile, as the god ordered us,
First having crowned my father's sepulchre
With pure libations and rich offerings
Of new-shorn tresses, will return anon,
An urn of well-wrought brasswork in our hands,
The same we hid in the brush-wood, as thon know'st.
This will confirm the feignèd tale we bring,
That I am dead and to the pyre consigned,
Naught left of me but ashes and grey dust:
Little reck I by rumour to be dead,
So I live on to win me deathless fame.
The end, methinks, gives any fraud excuse.
Oft have I heard of men, reputed wise,
Who spread the rumour of their death, and so
Returning home a heartier welcome found.
Thus by my bruited death I too aspire
To blaze a sudden meteor on my foes.
But O my country and my country's gods,
Give me fair welcome, prosper my emprise!
And greet me too, thou palace of my sires;
A heaven-sent purger of thy stain I come.
Send me not forth again to banishment,
But O! restore to me its ancient wealth,
May I refound its old prosperity!
Enough of words; go presently, old friend,
Attend thy business; and we two will go,
And watch the time, for opportunity
Is the best captain of all enterprise.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰώ μοί μοι δύστηνος.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

καὶ μὴν θυρῶν ἔδοξα προσπόλων τινὸς
ὑποστενούσης ἔνδον αἰσθέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἆρ' ἐστὶν ἡ δύστηνος Ἠλέκτρα· θέλεις 80
μείνωμεν αὐτοῦ κἀπακούσωμεν[1] γόων;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἥκιστα· μηδὲν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ Λοξίου
πειρώμεθ' ἔρδειν κἀπὸ τῶνδ' ἀρχηγετεῖν,
πατρὸς χέοντες λουτρά· ταῦτα γὰρ φέρει
νίκην τ' ἐφ' ἡμῖν καὶ κράτος τῶν δρωμένων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φάος ἁγνὸν
καὶ γῆς ἰσόμοιρ' ἀήρ, ὥς μοι
πολλὰς μὲν θρήνων ᾠδάς,
πολλὰς δ' ἀντήρεις ᾔσθου
στέρνων πληγὰς αἱμασσομένων, 90
ὁπόταν δνοφερὰ νὺξ ὑπολειφθῇ·
τὰ δὲ παννυχίδων ἤδη στυγεραὶ
ξυνίσασ' εὐναὶ μογερῶν οἴκων,
ὅσα τὸν δύστηνον ἐμὸν θρηνῶ
πατέρ', ὃν κατὰ μὲν βάρβαρον αἶαν
φοίνιος Ἄρης οὐκ ἐξένισεν,
μήτηρ δ' ἡμὴ χὡ κοινολεχὴς
Αἴγισθος ὅπως δρῦν ὑλοτόμοι

[1] κανακούσωμεν MSS., Nauck corr.

ELECTRA (*within*)

Ah me! unhappy me!

AGED SERVANT

Hist! from the doors a voice, my son, methought,
A wailing as of some handmaid within.

ORESTES

Can it be sad Electra! Shall we stay
And overhear her lamentable plaint?

AGED SERVANT

Not so; we first must strive before all else
To do as Loxias bade us and thence take
Our auspices—with lustral waters lave
Thy father's grave, thus shall we surely win
Vantage at each step, victory in the end.

[*Exeunt. Enter* ELECTRA *from the palace.*

ELECTRA

O holy light,
O circumambient air,
What wailings of despair,
What sight
Have ye not witnessed in the first grey morn,
Beatings of breasts and bosoms madly torn!
By night for me is spread
No festal banquet in this haunted hall,
But my lone pallet bed.
All night I muse upon my father dead,
Not in a foreign land at Ares' call,
But here, at home, by my own mother slain;
Her and Aegisthus, these adulterers twain;
Felled by their axe's bloody stroke,
E'en as the woodman fells an oak.

σχίζουσι κάρα φονίῳ πελέκει,
κοὐδεὶς τούτων οἶκτος ἀπ' ἄλλης 100
ἢ 'μοῦ φέρεται, σοῦ, πάτερ, οὕτως
αἰκῶς οἰκτρῶς τε θανόντος.

ἀλλ' οὐ μὲν δὴ
λήξω θρήνων στυγερῶν τε γόων,
ἔστ' ἂν παμφεγγεῖς ἄστρων
ῥιπάς, λεύσσω δὲ τόδ' ἦμαρ,
μὴ οὐ τεκνολέτειρ' ὥς τις ἀηδὼν
ἐπὶ κωκυτῷ τῶνδε πατρῴων
πρὸ θυρῶν ἠχὼ πᾶσι προφωνεῖν.
ὦ δῶμ' Ἀΐδου καὶ Περσεφόνης, 110
ὦ χθόνι' Ἑρμῆ καὶ πότνι' Ἀρὰ
σεμναί τε θεῶν παῖδες Ἐρινύες,
αἳ τοὺς ἀδίκως θνῄσκοντας ὁρᾶθ',
αἳ τοὺς εὐνὰς ὑποκλεπτομένους,
ἔλθετ', ἀρήξατε, τίσασθε πατρὸς
φόνον ἡμετέρου,
καί μοι τὸν ἐμὸν πέμψατ' ἀδελφόν·
μούνη γὰρ ἄγειν οὐκέτι σωκῶ
λύπης ἀντίρροπον ἄχθος. 120

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ παῖ, παῖ δυστανοτάτας στρ. α'
Ἠλέκτρα ματρός, τίν' ἀεὶ
τάκεις ὧδ' ἀκόρεστον οἰμωγὰν
τὸν πάλαι ἐκ δολερᾶς ἀθεώτατα
ματρὸς ἁλόντ' ἀπάταις Ἀγαμέμνονα
κακᾷ τε χειρὶ πρόδοτον; ὡς ὁ τάδε πορὼν
ὄλοιτ', εἴ μοι θέμις τάδ' αὐδᾶν.

And I, O father, I alone of all
　　Thy house am left forlorn
　　To make my moan, to mourn
　　　　Thy piteous fall.

Yet never, while these eyes
Behold or sun or star-bespangled skies,
Will I restrain my plaint, my bitter cries;
　　But like some nightingale
　　My ravished nest bewail,
And through these halls shall sound my groans
　　and sighs.
Halls of Persephonè and Death,
Guide of the shades, O Hermes, and O Wraith,
Ye god-sprung Furies dread
Who watch when blood is shed,
Or stained the marriage bed,
O aid me to avenge my father slain,
O send my brother back again!
Alone, no more I countervail
Grief that o'erloads the scale.

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS

Child of a mother all unblest, (*Str.* 1)
Electra, how in grief that knows no rest
Thou witherest;
Mourning thy father's cruel fate,
By her betrayed and slaughtered by her mate.
Black death await
The plotter of that sin,
If prayer so bold may answer win!

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ γενέθλα γενναίων,
ἥκετ' ἐμῶν καμάτων παραμύθιον. 130
οἶδά τε καὶ ξυνίημι τάδ', οὔ τί με
φυγγάνει, οὐδ' ἐθέλω προλιπεῖν τόδε,
μὴ οὐ τὸν ἐμὸν στενάχειν πατέρ' ἄθλιον.
ἀλλ' ὦ παντοίας φιλότητος ἀμειβόμεναι χάριν,
ἐᾶτέ μ' ὧδ' ἀλύειν,
αἰαῖ, ἱκνοῦμαι

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὔτοι τόν γ' ἐξ 'Αΐδα ἀντ. α'
παγκοίνου λίμνας πατέρ' ἀν-
στάσεις οὔτε γόοισιν οὔτ' εὐχαῖς.[1]
ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τῶν μετρίων ἐπ' ἀμήχανον 140
ἄλγος ἀεὶ στενάχουσα διόλλυσαι,
ἐν οἷς ἀνάλυσίς ἐστιν οὐδεμία κακῶν.
τί μοι τῶν δυσφόρων ἐφίει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

νήπιος ὃς τῶν οἰκτρῶς
οἰχομένων γονέων ἐπιλάθεται.
ἀλλ' ἐμέ γ' ἁ στονόεσσ' ἄραρεν φρένας,
ἃ Ἴτυν, αἰὲν Ἴτυν ὀλοφύρεται,
ὄρνις ἀτυζομένα, Διὸς ἄγγελος.
ἰὼ παντλάμων Νιόβα, σὲ δ' ἔγωγε νέμω θεόν, 150
ἅτ' ἐν τάφῳ πετραίῳ
αἰεὶ δακρύεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὔτοι σοὶ μούνᾳ, τέκνον, στρ. β'
ἄχος ἐφάνη βροτῶν,

[1] οὔτε γόοις οὔτε λιταῖσιν MSS., Erfurdt corr.

ELECTRA

Ah, noble friends ye come, I see
To ease my misery;
Your kind intent, O trust me, I perceive.
Yet can I never leave
My task, each day, each hour, anew to shed
Tears o'er my father dead.
O kindly hearts, so ready to repay
All friendship owes,
Leave me, O leave me (this one boon I pray)
To my wiid woes.

CHORUS

Yet him, thy sire, from Acheron's dark shore (*Ant.*1)
By prayers or cries thou never can'st restore,
No, never more;
And by excess of grief thou perishest.
If remedy be none, were it not best
From grief to rest?
O rest thee! why
Thus nurse thy fruitless misery?

ELECTRA

That child's insensate who remembers not
His sire's sad lot.
O bird of Zeus, to thine I'll set my note,
Who with full throat
For Itys, Itys griev'st from eve till morn.
Ah! Niobe forlorn,
How blest art thou who tombed in stone dost lie
And weep for aye!

CHORUS

Not thou alone, hast sorrow; others share (*Str.* 2)
Thy load of care.

πρὸς ὅ τι σὺ τῶν ἔνδον εἶ περισσά,
οἷς ὁμόθεν εἶ καὶ γονᾷ ξύναιμος,
οἵα Χρυσόθεμις ζώει καὶ Ἰφιάνασσα,
κρυπτᾷ τ' ἀχέων ἐν ἥβᾳ,
ὄλβιος, ὃν ἁ κλεινὰ 160
γᾶ ποτε Μυκηναίων
δέξεται εὐπατρίδαν, Διὸς εὔφρονι
βήματι μολόντα τάνδε γᾶν Ὀρέσταν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅν γ' ἐγὼ ἀκάματα προσμένουσ', ἄτεκνος,
τάλαιν', ἀνύμφευτος αἰὲν οἰχνῶ,
δάκρυσι μυδαλέα, τὸν ἀνήνυτον
οἶτον ἔχουσα κακῶν· ὁ δὲ λάθεται
ὧν τ' ἔπαθ' ὧν τ' ἐδάη. τί γὰρ οὐκ ἐμοὶ
ἔρχεται ἀγγελίας ἀπατώμενον; 170
ἀεὶ μὲν γὰρ ποθεῖ,
ποθῶν δ' οὐκ ἀξιοῖ φανῆναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει μοι, θάρσει, τέκνον. ἀντ. β'
ἔτι μέγας οὐρανῷ
Ζεύς, ὃς ἐφορᾷ πάντα καὶ κρατύνει·
ᾧ τὸν ὑπεραλγῆ χόλον νέμουσα
μήθ' οἷς ἐχθαίρεις ὑπεράχθεο μήτ' ἐπιλάθου·
χρόνος γὰρ εὐμαρὴς θεός.
οὔτε γὰρ ὁ τὰν Κρῖσαν 180
βούνομον ἔχων ἀκτὰν
παῖς Ἀγαμεμνονίδας ἀπερίτροπος
οὔθ' ὁ παρὰ τὸν Ἀχέροντα θεὸς ἀνάσσων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἐμὲ μὲν ὁ πολὺς ἀπολέλοιπεν ἤδη
βίοτος ἀνέλπιστος, οὐδ' ἔτ' ἀρκῶ·

Think on thy kinsfolk whom afflictions press
Than thine no less,
Iphianassa and Chrysothemis.
Think of thy brother; sorrow now is his,
An exiled youth, yet shortly shall he come
By heaven's good guidance home,
And glad Mycenae shall Orestes own
Heir to his father's throne.

ELECTRA

Yea, for him long years I wait,
Unwed, childless, desolate,
Drenched with tears that ever flow
For my barren load of woe;
And the wrongs whereof he wot,
Or hath heard, are all forgot.
All those messages are vain—
How he hopes to come again,
How for home his heart doth yearn!—
Yet he wills not to return.

CHORUS (*Ant.* 2)

Take heart, my child, Zeus still in heaven is king,
And orders everything;
To him commit the wrath that gnaws thy breast,
His will is ever best.
Nurse, as is meet, thy vengeance, but abate
Excess of hate,
For Time can heal, a gentle god and mild.
Nor Agamemnon's child
Who long by Crisa's pastoral shore remains,
Nor he who reigns
O'er Acheron will nevermore relent.

ELECTRA

Nay but for me is spent
The best of life; I languish in despair.

ἅτις ἄνευ τεκέων[1] κατατάκομαι,
ἇς φίλος οὔτις ἀνὴρ ὑπερίσταται,
ἀλλ' ἀπερεί τις ἔποικος ἀναξία
οἰκονομῶ θαλάμους πατρός, ὧδε μὲν 190
ἀεικεῖ σὺν στολᾷ,
κεναῖς δ' ἀμφίσταμαι τραπέζαις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰκτρὰ μὲν νόστοις αὐδά, στρ. γ'
οἰκτρὰ δ' ἐν κοίταις πατρῴαις
ὅτε οἱ[2] παγχάλκων ἀνταία
γενύων ὡρμάθη πλαγά.
δόλος ἦν ὁ φράσας, ἔρος ὁ κτείνας,
δεινὰν δεινῶς προφυτεύσαντες
μορφάν, εἴτ' οὖν θεὸς εἴτε βροτῶν
ἦν ὁ ταῦτα πράσσων. 200

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ πασᾶν κείνα πλέον ἁμέρα
ἐλθοῦσ' ἐχθίστα δή μοι·
ὦ νύξ, ὦ δείπνων ἀρρήτων
ἔκπαγλ' ἄχθη,
τοὺς ἐμὸς ἴδε πατὴρ
θανάτους αἰκεῖς διδύμαιν χειροῖν,
αἳ τὸν ἐμὸν εἷλον βίον πρόδοτον, αἵ μ' ἀπώλεσαν·
οἷς θεὸς ὁ μέγας Ὀλύμπιος
ποίνιμα πάθεα παθεῖν πόροι, 210
μηδέ ποτ' ἀγλαΐας ἀποναίατο
τοιάδ' ἀνύσαντες ἔργα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φράζου μὴ πόρσω φωνεῖν. ἀντ. γ'
οὐ γνώμαν ἴσχεις ἐξ οἵων

[1] τοκέων MSS., Meineke corr.
[2] ὅτε σοι MSS., Hermann corr.

Fordone with care,
Without a parent's love or husband's aid,
An orphaned maid.
Here in the chambers of my sire I wait
In low estate,
Or like a stranger who in beggar's weeds
On fragments feeds.

CHORUS (*Str.* 3)

Dire was the voice that greeted first
Thy sire's return, and dire the cry
That from the banquet-chamber burst,
A wail of agony;
What time the brazen axe's blow
Struck him and laid him low,
'Twas lust begat and craft conceived the deed,
A monstrous offspring of a monstrous seed,
Whether a god or mortal wrought the woe.

ELECTRA

Dawn, the darkest of all morrows,
Night, the crown of all my sorrows,
When that foul feast for the dead
By those traitors twain was spread,
Who slew my sire—me too
In slaying him they slew.
May the great Olympian King
Send on them like suffering;
Bitter be of sin the fruit;
May they perish branch and root!

CHORUS (*Ant.* 3

O curb thy tongue! hast thou no thought

τὰ παρόντ᾽ οἰκεία, εἰς ἄτας
ἐμπίπτεις οὕτως αἰκῶς;
πολὺ γάρ τι κακῶν ὑπερεκτήσω,
σᾷ δυσθύμῳ τίκτουσ᾽ ἀεὶ
ψυχᾷ πολέμους· τὰ δὲ τοῖς δυνατοῖς
οὐκ ἐριστὰ πλάθειν. 220

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δεινοῖς ἠναγκάσθην, δεινοῖς·
ἔξοιδ᾽, οὐ λάθει μ᾽ ὀργά.
ἀλλ᾽ ἐν γὰρ δεινοῖς οὐ σχήσω
ταύτας ἄτας,
ὄφρα με βίος ἔχῃ.
τίνι γάρ ποτ᾽ ἄν, ὦ φιλία γενέθλα,
πρόσφορον ἀκούσαιμ᾽ ἔπος, τίνι φρονοῦντι καίρια;
ἄνετέ μ᾽ ἄνετε, παράγοροι·
τάδε γὰρ ἄλυτα κεκλήσεται,
οὐδέ ποτ᾽ ἐκ καμάτων ἀποπαύσομαι 230
ἀνάριθμος ὧδε θρήνων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽ οὖν εὐνοίᾳ γ᾽ αὐδῶ,
μάτηρ ὡσεί τις πιστά,
μὴ τίκτειν σ᾽ ἄταν ἄταις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ τί μέτρον κακότατος ἔφυ; φέρε,
πῶς ἐπὶ τοῖς φθιμένοις ἀμελεῖν καλόν;
ἐν τίνι τοῦτ᾽ ἔβλαστ᾽ ἀνθρώπων;
μήτ᾽ εἴην ἔντιμος τούτοις
μήτ᾽, εἴ τῳ πρόσκειμαι χρηστῷ, 240
ξυνναίοιμ᾽ εὔκηλος, γονέων
ἐκτίμους ἴσχουσα πτέρυγας
ὀξυτόνων γόων.

How thine own misery thou hast wrought,
And mak'st a burden of thy life
By ever heaping strife on strife
In sullen mood? Ill fares the right
When feebleness contends with might.

ELECTRA

Bitter constraint compelled me, and I know
My heart with wrath did overflow;
But never while life lasts will I control,
Thus wronged, the indignant passion of my soul.
Ye mean me well, but solace is there none
For woes like mine, so all who know must own.
Forbear, kind comforters, forbear; be sure
A case so desperate admits no cure.
What respite to my sorrows, what relief?
No tears, no moans, can satisfy such grief.

CHORUS

O heap not misery on misery,
As a fond mother I would plead with thee.

ELECTRA

No, for this villainy grows and knows no bound.
Where can a race be found
So vile as they, to disregard the dead?
By praise of such men I were ill bestead.
O may I ne'er, if fate should on me smile,
In careless ease sad memories beguile,
Clipping the pinions of my mournful song,
The dirges due that to my sire belong.

εἰ γὰρ ὁ μὲν θανὼν γᾶ τε καὶ οὐδὲν ὢν
κείσεται τάλας,
οἱ δὲ μὴ πάλιν
δώσουσ' ἀντιφόνους δίκας,
ἔρροι τ' ἂν αἰδὼς
ἁπάντων τ' εὐσέβεια θνατῶν. 250

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ μέν, ὦ παῖ, καὶ τὸ σὸν σπεύδουσ' ἅμα
καὶ τοὐμὸν αὐτῆς ἦλθον· εἰ δὲ μὴ καλῶς
λέγω, σὺ νίκα· σοὶ γὰρ ἑψόμεσθ' ἅμα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

αἰσχύνομαι μέν, ὦ γυναῖκες, εἰ δοκῶ
πολλοῖσι θρήνοις δυσφορεῖν ὑμῖν ἄγαν.
ἀλλ' ἡ βία γὰρ ταῦτ' ἀναγκάζει με δρᾶν,
σύγγνωτε· πῶς γὰρ ἥτις εὐγενὴς γυνή,
πατρῷ' ὁρῶσα πήματ', οὐ δρῴη τάδ' ἄν;
ἁγὼ κατ' ἦμαρ καὶ κατ' εὐφρόνην ἀεὶ
θάλλοντα μᾶλλον ἢ καταφθίνονθ' ὁρῶ· 260
ᾗ πρῶτα μὲν τὰ μητρός, ἥ μ' ἐγείνατο,
ἔχθιστα συμβέβηκεν· εἶτα δώμασιν
ἐν τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τοῖς φονεῦσι τοῦ πατρὸς
ξύνειμι, κἀκ τῶνδ' ἄρχομαι κἀκ τῶνδέ μοι
λαβεῖν θ' ὁμοίως καὶ τὸ τητᾶσθαι πέλει.
ἔπειτα ποίας ἡμέρας δοκεῖς μ' ἄγειν,
ὅταν θρόνοις Αἴγισθον ἐνθακοῦντ' ἴδω
τοῖσιν πατρῴοις, εἰσίδω δ' ἐσθήματα
φοροῦντ' ἐκείνῳ ταὐτὰ καὶ παρεστίους
σπένδοντα λοιβὰς ἔνθ' ἐκεῖνον ὤλεσεν, 270
ἴδω δὲ τούτων τὴν τελευταίαν ὕβριν,
τὸν αὐτοέντην ἡμὶν ἐν κοίτῃ πατρὸς
ξὺν τῇ ταλαίνῃ μητρί, μητέρ' εἰ χρεὼν

For if to dust and nothingness the dead
Are doomed, nor blood for blood be shed,
Farewell to sanctities of law,
Farewell to reverence and awe.

CHORUS

I came in thy behalf no less than mine,
Daughter, but if my words displease thee, well,
Have it thy way; we follow thee no less.

ELECTRA

It shames me, friends, that ye should thus set down
To frowardness my too persistent grief.
But since I yield to hard necessity,
Bear with me. How indeed could any woman
Of noble blood who sees her father's home
Plague-stricken, as I see it night and day,
And each day stricken worse, not do as I?
For me a mother's love has turned to hate;
In my own home on sufferance I live
With my sire's murderers, on whose will it rests
To give or to withhold my daily bread.
Think what a life is mine, to see each day
Aegisthus seated on my father's throne,
Wearing the royal robes my father wore,
Pouring libations on the hearth, whereat
He slew him, and, to crown his insolence,
The assassin lays him in my father's bed
Beside my mother—mother shall I call

ταύτην προσαυδᾶν τῷδε συγκοιμωμένην·
ἡ δ' ὧδε τλήμων ὥστε τῷ μιάστορι
ξύνεστ', ἐρινὺν οὔτιν' ἐκφοβουμένη·
ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ἐγγελῶσα τοῖς ποιουμένοις,
εὑροῦσ' ἐκείνην ἡμέραν, ἐν ᾗ τότε
πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν ἐκ δόλου κατέκτανεν,
ταύτῃ χοροὺς ἵστησι καὶ μηλοσφαγεῖ 280
θεοῖσιν ἔμμην' ἱερὰ τοῖς σωτηρίοις.
ἐγὼ δ' ὁρῶσ' ἡ δύσμορος κατὰ στέγας
κλαίω, τέτηκα, κἀπικωκύω πατρὸς
τὴν δυστάλαιναν δαῖτ' ἐπωνομασμένην
αὐτὴ πρὸς αὐτήν. οὐδὲ γὰρ κλαῦσαι πάρα
τοσόνδ' ὅσον μοι θυμὸς ἡδονὴν φέρει.
αὕτη γὰρ ἡ λόγοισι γενναία γυνὴ
φωνοῦσα τοιάδ' ἐξονειδίζει κακά·
ὦ δύσθεον μίσημα, σοὶ μόνῃ πατὴρ
τέθνηκεν; ἄλλος δ' οὔτις ἐν πένθει βροτῶν; 290
κακῶς ὄλοιο, μηδέ σ' ἐκ γόων ποτὲ
τῶν νῦν ἀπαλλάξειαν οἱ κάτω θεοί.
τάδ' ἐξυβρίζει· πλὴν ὅταν κλύῃ τινὸς
ἥξοντ' Ὀρέστην· τηνικαῦτα δ' ἐμμανὴς
βοᾷ παραστᾶσ'· οὐ σύ μοι τῶνδ' αἰτία;
οὐ σὸν τόδ' ἐστὶ τοὔργον, ἥτις ἐκ χερῶν
κλέψασ' Ὀρέστην τῶν ἐμῶν ὑπεξέθου;
ἀλλ' ἴσθι τοι τίσουσά γ' ἀξίαν δίκην.
τοιαῦθ' ὑλακτεῖ, σὺν δ' ἐποτρύνει πέλας
ὁ κλεινὸς αὐτῇ ταὐτὰ νυμφίος παρών, 300
ὁ πάντ' ἄναλκις οὗτος, ἡ πᾶσα βλάβη,
ὁ σὺν γυναιξὶ τὰς μάχας ποιούμενος.
ἐγὼ δ' Ὀρέστην τῶνδε προσμένουσ' ἀεὶ
παυστῆρ' ἐφήξειν ἡ τάλαιν' ἀπόλλυμαι.
μέλλων γὰρ ἀεὶ δρᾶν τι τὰς οὔσας τέ μου

His paramour? So lost to shame is she
That the adulteress fears no vengeance. No,
As if exulting in her infamy,
She watches month to month to know the day
Whereon by treachery she slew my sire,
And keeps that day with dance and sacrifice,
Each month, of sheep to tutelary gods.
Beholding this I weep and waste within,
And to myself bewail the unhallowed feast
Named of my sire, with silent tears, for e'en
The luxury of wailing is denied me.
This woman (saintly is her speech) upbraids
And rates me thus: "Ungodly, hateful girl,
Hast thou alone to bear a father's loss,
Art thou the only mourner? Out upon thee!
Perdition seize thee! and in hell may'st thou
Find no deliverance from thy present grief!"
So rails she, save at times when rumours run
Orestes is at hand, then wild with rage
She thunders in my ears "This is thy doing;
Was it not thou who from my hands didst steal
Orestes and convey him safe away?
Mark my words, thou shalt rue it!" So she screams,
And her abettor's there to egg her on,
Her glorious consort who repeats her gibes,
That rogue in grain, that dastardly poltroon,
Who fights his battles with a woman's aid.
Meanwhile I wait until Orestes comes
To end my woes, and waiting pine away.
Still, still he means to act and never acts,

καὶ τὰς ἀπούσας ἐλπίδας διέφθορεν.
ἐν οὖν τοιούτοις οὔτε σωφρονεῖν, φίλαι,
οὔτ' εὐσεβεῖν πάρεστιν· ἀλλ' ἔν τοι κακοῖς
πολλή 'στ' ἀνάγκη κἀπιτηδεύειν κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φέρ' εἰπέ, πότερον ὄντος Αἰγίσθου πέλας 310
λέγεις τάδ' ἡμῖν ἢ βεβῶτος ἐκ δόμων;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ κάρτα· μὴ δόκει μ' ἄν, εἴπερ ἦν πέλας,
θυραῖον οἰχνεῖν· νῦν δ' ἀγροῖσι τυγχάνει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἦ κἂν ἐγὼ θαρσοῦσα μᾶλλον ἐς λόγους
τοὺς σοὺς ἱκοίμην, εἴπερ ὧδε ταῦτ' ἔχει;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς νῦν ἀπόντος ἱστόρει· τί σοι φίλον;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ δή σ' ἐρωτῶ· τοῦ κασιγνήτου τί φής,
ἥξοντος ἢ μέλλοντος; εἰδέναι θέλω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φησίν γε· φάσκων δ' οὐδὲν ὧν λέγει ποεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φιλεῖ γὰρ ὀκνεῖν πρᾶγμ' ἀνὴρ πράσσων μέγα. 320

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ἔγωγ' ἔσωσ' ἐκεῖνον οὐκ ὄκνῳ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θάρσει· πέφυκεν ἐσθλός, ὥστ' ἀρκεῖν φίλοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πέποιθ', ἐπεί τἂν οὐ μακρὰν ἔζων ἐγώ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μὴ νῦν ἔτ' εἴπῃς μηδέν· ὡς δόμων ὁρῶ
τὴν σὴν ὅμαιμον ἐκ πατρὸς ταὐτοῦ φύσιν,

And all my hopes are blasted, flower and root.
In such a case what room is there, my friends,
For patience, what for piety? In sooth
Those in ill plight are driven to evil ways.

CHORUS

Stay, tell me, is Aegisthus nigh at hand,
While thus thou speakest, or is he from home?

ELECTRA

From home, of course! Think you, were he within,
I should thus venture forth? He is now afield.

CHORUS

More freely then may I converse with thee,
If this is so.

ELECTRA

It is; ask what thou wilt.

CHORUS

'Tis of thy brother I would question thee.
Comes he, or tarries yet? I fain would know.

ELECTRA

He says "I come," but does not what he says.

CHORUS

A man thinks twice with some great work in hand.

ELECTRA

I thought not twice when I delivered him.

CHORUS

Take heart, he is loyal and will not fail his friends.

ELECTRA

I trust him, else I had not lived so long.

CHORUS

No more for this time; at the doors I see
Chrysothemis, thy sister, of one sire

Χρυσόθεμιν, ἔκ τε μητρός, ἐντάφια χεροῖν
φέρουσαν, οἷα τοῖς κάτω νομίζεται.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τίν' αὖ σὺ τήνδε πρὸς θυρῶνος ἐξόδοις
ἐλθοῦσα φωνεῖς, ὦ κασιγνήτη, φάτιν,
κοὐδ' ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ διδαχθῆναι θέλεις 330
θυμῷ ματαίῳ μὴ χαρίζεσθαι κενά;
καίτοι τοσοῦτόν γ' οἶδα κἀμαυτήν, ὅτι
ἀλγῶ 'πὶ τοῖς παροῦσιν· ὥστ' ἄν, εἰ σθένος
λάβοιμι, δηλώσαιμ' ἂν οἷ' αὐτοῖς φρονῶ.
νῦν δ' ἐν κακοῖς μοι πλεῖν ὑφειμένῃ δοκεῖ,
καὶ μὴ δοκεῖν μὲν δρᾶν τι, πημαίνειν δὲ μή·
τοιαῦτα δ' ἄλλα καὶ σὲ βούλομαι ποεῖν.
καίτοι τὸ μὲν δίκαιον οὐχ ᾗ 'γὼ λέγω,
ἀλλ' ᾗ σὺ κρίνεις· εἰ δ' ἐλευθέραν με δεῖ
ζῆν, τῶν κρατούντων ἐστὶ πάντ' ἀκουστέα. 340

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

δεινόν γέ σ' οὖσαν πατρὸς οὗ σὺ παῖς ἔφυς,
κείνου λελῆσθαι, τῆς δὲ τικτούσης μέλειν.
ἅπαντα γάρ σοι τἀμὰ νουθετήματα
κείνης διδακτά, κοὐδὲν ἐκ σαυτῆς λέγεις.
ἔπειθ' ἑλοῦ γε θάτερ', ἢ φρονεῖν κακῶς
ἢ τῶν φίλων φρονοῦσα μὴ μνήμην ἔχειν·
ἥτις λέγεις μὲν ἀρτίως ὡς, εἰ λάβοις
σθένος, τὸ τούτων μῖσος ἐκδείξειας ἄν,
ἐμοῦ δὲ πατρὶ πάντα τιμωρουμένης
οὔτε ξυνέρδεις τήν τε δρῶσαν ἐκτρέπεις. 350
οὐ ταῦτα πρὸς κακοῖσι δειλίαν ἔχει;
ἐπεὶ δίδαξον, ἢ μάθ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ, τί μοι
κέρδος γένοιτ' ἂν τῶνδε ληξάσῃ γόων.
οὐ ζῶ; κακῶς μέν, οἶδ', ἐπαρκούντως δ' ἐμοί.

Born and one mother; in her hands she bears
Gifts for the tomb that use and wont ordain.
Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Sister, why com'st thou once more to declaim
In public at the outer gate? Has time
Not schooled thee to desist from idle rage?
I too, my sister, chafe no less than thou
At our sad fortunes, and had I the power,
Would make it plain how I regard our masters.
But in the storm 'tis best to reef the sail,
Nor utter threats we cannot execute.
I would thou wert likeminded; yet I know
Justice is on thy side, and I am wrong.
Yet if I am to keep my liberty,
I needs must bow before the powers that be.

ELECTRA

O shame that thou, the child of such a sire,
Should'st him forget and take thy mother's part;
For all these admonitions are not thine,
A lesson thou repeatest, learnt of her.
Make thine election then, to be unwise,
Or show thy wisdom by forgetting friends.
Thou saidst, "If but the power were granted me,
I would make plain the hate I feel for them;"
And yet when I am straining every nerve
To avenge my sire, thou wilt not aid me; nay,
Dissuadest and wouldst have me hold my hand.
Shall we to all our ills add cowardice?
Tell me—or let me tell thee—what have I
To gain by ceasing from my sad complaint?
I still have life? a sorry life, indeed,

λυπῶ δὲ τούτους, ὥστε τῷ τεθνηκότι
τιμὰς προσάπτειν, εἴ τις ἔστ' ἐκεῖ χάρις.
σὺ δ' ἡμὶν ἡ μισοῦσα μισεῖς μὲν λόγῳ,
ἔργῳ δὲ τοῖς φονεῦσι τοῦ πατρὸς ξύνει.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ ἄν ποτ', οὐδ' εἴ μοι τὰ σὰ
μέλλοι τις οἴσειν δῶρ', ἐφ' οἷσι νῦν χλιδᾷς, 360
τούτοις ὑπεικάθοιμι· σοὶ δὲ πλουσία
τράπεζα κείσθω καὶ περιρρείτω βίος.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἔστω τοὐμὲ μὴ λυπεῖν μόνον
βόσκημα· τῆς σῆς δ' οὐκ ἐρῶ τιμῆς τυχεῖν,
οὐδ' ἂν σύ, σώφρων γ' οὖσα. νῦν δ' ἐξὸν πατρὸς
πάντων ἀρίστου παῖδα κεκλῆσθαι, καλοῦ
τῆς μητρός· οὕτω γὰρ φανεῖ πλείστοις κακή,
θανόντα πατέρα καὶ φίλους προδοῦσα σούς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν πρὸς ὀργήν, πρὸς θεῶν· ὡς τοῖς λόγοις
ἔνεστιν ἀμφοῖν κέρδος, εἰ σὺ μὲν μάθοις 370
τοῖς τῆσδε χρῆσθαι, τοῖς δὲ σοῖς αὕτη πάλιν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἐγὼ μέν, ὦ γυναῖκες, ἠθάς εἰμί πως
τῶν τῆσδε μύθων· οὐδ' ἂν ἐμνήσθην ποτέ,
εἰ μὴ κακὸν μέγιστον εἰς αὐτὴν ἰὸν
ἤκουσ', ὃ ταύτην τῶν μακρῶν σχήσει γόων.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φέρ' εἰπὲ δὴ τὸ δεινόν· εἰ γὰρ τῶνδέ μοι
μεῖζόν τι λέξεις, οὐκ ἂν ἀντείποιμ' ἔτι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' ἐξερῶ σοι πᾶν ὅσον κάτοιδ' ἐγώ.
μέλλουσι γάρ σ', εἰ τῶνδε μὴ λήξεις γόων,
ἐνταῦθα πέμψειν ἔνθα μή ποθ' ἡλίου 380
φέγγος προσόψει, ζῶσα δ' ἐν κατηρεφεῖ
στέγῃ χθονὸς τῆσδ' ἐκτὸς ὑμνήσεις κακά.

But good enough for me; and them I vex,
And vexing them do honour to the dead,
If anything can touch the world of shades.
Thou hatest? Nay, thy deeds belie thy words,
While thou consortest with the murderers;
So would not I, though they should offer me
The pomp that makes thee proud, the loaded board,
Thy life of ease; no, I would never yield.
Enough for me spare diet and a soul
Void of offence; thy state I covet not,
Nor wouldst thou, wert thou wise. Men might have
called thee
Child of the noblest sire that ever lived;
Be called thy mother's, rightly named as base,
Betrayer of thy dead sire and thy kin.

CHORUS

No angry words, I pray, for both of you
There's profit in this parleying, if thou
Wouldst learn of her, and she in turn of thee.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I know her moods too well to take offence,
Nor had I now approached her, but I learnt
Of new impending peril that is like
To put a finish to her long-drawn woes.

ELECTRA

Say what can be this terror; if 'tis worse
Than what I now bear, I will call a truce.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

All I have learnt in full I will impart.
They purpose, if thou wilt not stay thy plaints,
To send thee where thou shalt not see the sun,
Far hence, to some dark dungeon, there to spend
Thy days and nights in litanies of woe.

πρὸς ταῦτα φράζου καί με μή ποθ' ὕστερον
παθοῦσα μέμψῃ· νῦν γὰρ ἐν καλῷ φρονεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ ταῦτα δή με καὶ βεβούλευνται ποεῖν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μάλισθ'· ὅταν περ οἴκαδ' Αἴγισθος μόλῃ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἐξίκοιτο τοῦδέ γ' οὕνεκ' ἐν τάχει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τίν', ὦ τάλαινα, τόνδ' ἐπηράσω λόγον;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐλθεῖν ἐκεῖνον, εἴ τι τῶνδε δρᾶν νοεῖ.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὅπως πάθῃς τί χρῆμα; ποῦ ποτ' εἶ φρενῶν; 390

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅπως ἀφ' ὑμῶν ὡς προσωτάτω φύγω.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

βίου δὲ τοῦ παρόντος οὐ μνείαν ἔχεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καλὸς γὰρ οὑμὸς βίοτος ὥστε θαυμάσαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' ἦν ἄν, εἰ σύ γ' εὖ φρονεῖν ἠπίστασο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μή μ' ἐκδίδασκε τοῖς φίλοις εἶναι κακήν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ διδάσκω· τοῖς κρατοῦσι δ' εἰκαθεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὺ ταῦτα θώπευ'· οὐκ ἐμοὺς τρόπους λέγεις.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καλόν γε μέντοι μὴ 'ξ ἀβουλίας πεσεῖν.

Therefore reflect, and blame me not too late;
Take warning and repent while yet 'tis time.

ELECTRA

Have they indeed resolved to treat me thus?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

The instant that Aegisthus is returned.

ELECTRA

Well, for my part I would he came back soon.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Insensate girl! What mean'st thou by this prayer?

ELECTRA

Would he were here, if this be his intent.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

That thou mayst suffer—what? Hast lost thy wits?

ELECTRA

A flight long leagues away from all of you.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Art thou indifferent to thy present life?

ELECTRA

O 'tis a marvellously happy life!

CHRYSOTHEMIS

It might have been, couldst thou have schooled thyself.

ELECTRA

Teach me not basely to betray my friends.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Not I; I teach submission to the strong.

ELECTRA

Fawn, if thou wilt; such cringing suits not me.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Yet not to fall through folly were no blame.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πεσούμεθ', εἰ χρή, πατρὶ τιμωρούμενοι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πατὴρ δὲ τούτων, οἶδα, συγγνώμην ἔχει. 400

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τἄπη πρὸς κακῶν ἐπαινέσαι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

σὺ δ' οὐχὶ πείσει καὶ συναινέσεις ἐμοί;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δῆτα· μή πω νοῦ τοσόνδ' εἴην κενή.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

χωρήσομαί τἄρ' οἶπερ ἐστάλην ὁδοῦ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποῖ δ' ἐμπορεύει; τῷ φέρεις τάδ' ἔμπυρα;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μήτηρ με πέμπει πατρὶ τυμβεῦσαι χοάς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας; ἦ τῷ δυσμενεστάτῳ βροτῶν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὃν ἔκταν' αὐτή· τοῦτο γὰρ λέξαι θέλεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐκ τοῦ φίλων πεισθεῖσα; τῷ τοῦτ' ἤρεσεν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἐκ δείματός του νυκτέρου, δοκεῖν ἐμοί. 410

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ θεοὶ πατρῷοι, συγγένεσθέ γ' ἀλλὰ νῦν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἔχεις τι θάρσος τοῦδε τοῦ τάρβους πέρι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἴ μοι λέγοις τὴν ὄψιν, εἴποιμ' ἂν τότε.

ELECTRA

If needs be, in a father's cause I'll fall.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I trust our father pardons us for this.

ELECTRA

Traitors take refuge in like sentiments.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Thou wilt not heed then or be ruled by me?

ELECTRA

I am not in my dotage, save the mark!

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Then I will do my errand.

ELECTRA

Whither away?
For whom art carrying these burnt offerings?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

My mother bids me crown our father's grave.

ELECTRA

Her mortal enemy's! How sayest thou?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

The husband whom she slew, so thou wouldst say.

ELECTRA

Which of her friends advised her? whence this whim?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

A nightly vision warned her, so I think.

ELECTRA

Gods of my fathers, aid me in this pass!

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Dost thou take heart of courage from her dread?

ELECTRA

Before I answer let me hear the dream.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ κάτοιδα πλὴν ἐπὶ σμικρὸν φράσαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

λέγ' ἀλλὰ τοῦτο· πολλά τοι σμικροὶ λόγοι
ἔσφηλαν ἤδη καὶ κατώρθωσαν βροτούς.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

λόγος τις αὐτήν ἐστιν εἰσιδεῖν πατρὸς
τοῦ σοῦ τε κἀμοῦ δευτέραν ὁμιλίαν
ἐλθόντος ἐς φῶς· εἶτα τόνδ' ἐφέστιον
πῆξαι λαβόντα σκῆπτρον οὑφόρει ποτὲ 420
αὐτός, τανῦν δ' Αἴγισθος· ἐκ δὲ τοῦδ' ἄνω
βλαστεῖν βρύοντα θαλλόν, ᾧ κατάσκιον
πᾶσαν γενέσθαι τὴν Μυκηναίων χθόνα.
τοιαῦτά του παρόντος, ἡνίχ' Ἡλίῳ
δείκνυσι τοὔναρ, ἔκλυον ἐξηγουμένου.
πλείω δὲ τούτων οὐ κάτοιδα, πλὴν ὅτι
πέμπει με κείνη τοῦδε τοῦ φόβου χάριν.
πρός νυν θεῶν σε λίσσομαι τῶν ἐγγενῶν
ἐμοὶ πιθέσθαι μηδ' ἀβουλίᾳ πεσεῖν·
εἰ γάρ μ' ἀπώσει, σὺν κακῷ μέτει πάλιν. 430

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη, τούτων μὲν ὧν ἔχεις χεροῖν
τύμβῳ προσάψῃς μηδέν· οὐ γάρ σοι θέμις
οὐδ' ὅσιον ἐχθρᾶς ἀπὸ γυναικὸς ἱστάναι
κτερίσματ' οὐδὲ λουτρὰ προσφέρειν πατρί·
ἀλλ' ἢ πνοαῖσιν ἢ βαθυσκαφεῖ κόνει
κρύψον νιν, ἔνθα μή ποτ' εἰς εὐνὴν πατρὸς
τούτων πρόσεισι μηδέν· ἀλλ' ὅταν θάνῃ
κειμήλι' αὐτῇ ταῦτα σῳζέσθω κάτω.
ἀρχὴν δ' ἄν, εἰ μὴ τλημονεστάτη γυνὴ
πασῶν ἔβλαστε, τάσδε δυσμενεῖς χοὰς 440

CHRYSOTHEMIS

There is but little that I have to tell.

ELECTRA

Tell it no less. A little word, men say,
Hath oftentimes determined weal or woe.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

'Tis said that she beheld thy sire and mine
In bodily presence standing by her side,
Revisiting the light of day. He took
The sceptre of Aegisthus, once his own,
And at the household altar planted it,
And from it sprang and spread a fruitful bough,
Till it o'ershadowed all Mycenae's land.
Such is the tale one told me who was by
When to the Sun-god she declared her dream.
Further I know not, save that in alarm
She sent me hither. Hearken then to me.
Sister, I pray thee by our household gods,
Fall not through folly ; if thou spurn me now,
Too late in sorrow wilt thou seek my aid.

ELECTRA

Nay, let not aught, my sister, touch the tomb,
Of all thou bearest. 'Twere a shame, a sin,
To offer on behalf of her, the accursed,
Gifts or libations to our father's ghost.
Scatter them to the winds or bury them
Deep in the dust, where nothing may defile
Our father's lone couch ; let her find them there,
A buried treasure when she comes to die.
Were she not abjectest of womankind,
She ne'er had thought with offerings of hate

οὐκ ἄν ποθ᾽ ὅν γ᾽ ἔκτεινε, τῷδ᾽ ἐπέστεφε.
σκέψαι γὰρ εἴ σοι προσφιλῶς αὐτῇ δοκεῖ
γέρα τάδ᾽ οὑν τάφοισι δέξεσθαι νέκυς,
ὑφ᾽ ἧς θανὼν ἄτιμος, ὥστε δυσμενής,
ἐμασχαλίσθη, κἀπὶ λουτροῖσιν κάρᾳ
κηλῖδας ἐξέμαξεν. ἆρα μὴ δοκεῖς
λυτήρι᾽ αὐτῇ ταῦτα τοῦ φόνου φέρειν;
οὐκ ἔστιν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν μέθες· σὺ δὲ
τεμοῦσα κρατὸς βοστρύχων ἄκρας φόβας
κἀμοῦ ταλαίνης, σμικρὰ μὲν τάδ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ ὅμως 450
ἅχω, δὸς αὐτῷ, τήνδ᾽ ἀλιπαρῆ τρίχα
καὶ ζῶμα τοὐμὸν οὐ χλιδαῖς ἠσκημένον.
αἰτοῦ δὲ προσπίτνουσα γῆθεν εὐμενῆ
ἡμῖν ἀρωγὸν αὐτὸν εἰς ἐχθροὺς μολεῖν,
καὶ παῖδ᾽ Ὀρέστην ἐξ ὑπερτέρας χερὸς
ἐχθροῖσιν αὐτοῦ ζῶντ᾽ ἐπεμβῆναι ποδί,
ὅπως τὸ λοιπὸν αὐτὸν ἀφνεωτέραις
χερσὶν στέφωμεν ἢ τανῦν δωρούμεθα.
οἶμαι μὲν οὖν, οἶμαί τι κἀκείνῳ μέλον
πέμψαι τάδ᾽ αὐτῇ δυσπρόσοπτ᾽ ὀνείρατα· 460
ὅμως δ᾽, ἀδελφή, σοί θ᾽ ὑπούργησον τάδε
ἐμοί τ᾽ ἀρωγὰ τῷ τε φιλτάτῳ βροτῶν
πάντων, ἐν Ἅιδου κειμένῳ κοινῷ πατρί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς εὐσέβειαν ἡ κόρη λέγει· σὺ δέ,
εἰ σωφρονήσεις, ὦ φίλη, δράσεις τάδε.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

δράσω· τὸ γὰρ δίκαιον οὐκ ἔχει λόγον
δυοῖν ἐρίζειν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐπισπεύδειν τὸ δρᾶν.

To crown her murdered victim's sepulchre.
Thinkst thou 'tis likely that her buried lord
Will take these honours kindly at her hands
Who slew him without pity like a foe,
Mangled[1] his corse, and for ablution washed
The bloodstains on his head? Say, is it like
These gifts will purge her of blood-guiltiness?
It cannot be. Fling them away and cut
A tress of thine own locks; and for my share
Give him from me—a poor thing, but my best—
This unkempt lock, this girdle unadorned.
Then fall upon thy knees and pray that he
May come, our gracious champion from the dead,
And that the young Orestes yet may live
To trample underfoot his vanquished foes.
So may we some day crown our father's tomb
With costlier gifts than these poor offerings.
I can but think, 'tis but a thought, that he
Had part in sending her this ominous dream.
Still, sister, do this service and so aid
Thyself and me, and him the most beloved
Of all men, e'en though dead, thy sire and mine.

CHORUS

'Tis piously advised, and thou, my daughter,
Wilt do her bidding, if thou art discreet.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I will. When duty calls, 'twere lack of sense
For two to wrangle; both should join to act.

[1] The full meaning is "to cut off the hands and feet and suspend them to the armpits." This was done to prevent the victim from taking vengeance.

πειρωμένῃ δὲ τῶνδε τῶν ἔργων ἐμοὶ
σιγὴ παρ' ὑμῶν, πρὸς θεῶν, ἔστω, φίλαι·
ὡς εἰ τάδ' ἡ τεκοῦσα πεύσεται, πικρὰν 470
δοκῶ με πεῖραν τήνδε τολμήσειν ἔτι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ στρ.

εἰ μὴ 'γὼ παράφρων μάντις ἔφυν καὶ γνώμας
λειπομένα σοφᾶς,
εἶσιν ἁ πρόμαντις
Δίκα, δίκαια φερομένα χεροῖν κράτη·
μέτεισιν, ὦ τέκνον, οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου.
ὕπεστί μοι θάρσος,
ἁδυπνόων κλύουσαν 480
ἀρτίως ὀνειράτων.
οὐ γάρ ποτ' ἀμναστεῖ γ' ὁ φύσας σ'[1] Ἑλλάνων
ἄναξ,
οὐδ' ἁ παλαιὰ χαλκόπλακτος ἀμφάκης γένυς,
ἅ νιν κατέπεφνεν αἰσχίσταις ἐν αἰκίαις.

ἀντ.

ἥξει καὶ πολύπους καὶ πολύχειρ ἁ δεινοῖς
κρυπτομένα λόχοις 490
χαλκόπους Ἐρινύς.
ἄλεκτρ' ἄνυμφα γὰρ ἐπέβα μιαιφόνων
γάμων ἁμιλλήμαθ' οἷσιν οὐ θέμις.
πρὸ τῶνδέ τοί μ' ἔχει
μή ποτε μή ποθ' ἡμῖν
ἀψεγὲς πελᾶν τέρας
τοῖς δρῶσι καὶ συνδρῶσιν. ἤ τοι μαντεῖαι βροτῶν 500
οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐν δεινοῖς ὀνείροις οὐδ' ἐν θεσφάτοις,
εἰ μὴ τόδε φάσμα νυκτὸς εὖ κατασχήσει.

[1] Wakefield adds σ'.

Only when I essay this perilous task,
Be silent, an you love me, friends, for if
My mother hears of it, I shall have cause
To rue my indiscretion soon or late.

[*Exit* CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHORUS (*Str.*)

Count me a prophet false, a witless wight,
If Justice, who inspires my prophecy,
Comes not, my child, to vindicate the right.
She comes and that right speedily.
My heart grows bold and nothing fears;
That dream was music in my ears.
It tells me that thy sire who whilom led
The Greeks to victory hath not forgot;
Yea, and that axe with double brazen head
Still thirsts for blood to wipe away its blot.

(*Ant.*)

So leaping from her ambush, brazen-shod,
Comes the Erinys with an armed host's tread,
For she hath seen a pair who knew not God
Driven by lust to an adulterous bed,
A bed with stains of murder dyed,
A bridal without groom or bride.
Therefore I know that not in vain is sent
This portent that the fall of guilt foretells,
For, if this vision fails of its intent,
Vain is all sooth, all dreams, all oracles.

ὦ Πέλοπος ἁ πρόσθεν
πολύπονος ἱππεία,
ὡς ἔμολες αἰανὴς
τᾷδε γᾷ.
εὖτε γὰρ ὁ ποντισθεὶς
Μυρτίλος ἐκοιμάθη,
παγχρύσεων δίφρων 510
δυστάνοις αἰκίαις
πρόρριζος ἐκριφθείς,
οὔ τί πω
ἔλειπεν ἐκ τοῦδ' οἴκου
πολύπονος αἰκία.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἀνειμένη μέν, ὡς ἔοικας, αὖ στρέφει·
οὐ γὰρ πάρεστ' Αἴγισθος, ὅς σ' ἐπεῖχ' ἀεὶ
μή τοι θυραίαν γ' οὖσαν αἰσχύνειν φίλους·
νῦν δ' ὡς ἄπεστ' ἐκεῖνος, οὐδὲν ἐντρέπει
ἐμοῦ γε· καίτοι πολλὰ πρὸς πολλούς με δὴ 520
ἐξεῖπας ὡς θρασεῖα καὶ πέρα δίκης
ἄρχω, καθυβρίζουσα καὶ σὲ καὶ τὰ σά·
ἐγὼ δ' ὕβριν μὲν οὐκ ἔχω, κακῶς δέ σε
λέγω κακῶς κλύουσα πρὸς σέθεν θαμά.
πατὴρ γάρ, οὐδὲν ἄλλο, σοὶ πρόσχημ' ἀεὶ
ὡς ἐξ ἐμοῦ τέθνηκεν. ἐξ ἐμοῦ· καλῶς
ἔξοιδα· τῶνδ' ἄρνησις οὐκ ἔνεστί μοι·
ἡ γὰρ Δίκη νιν εἷλεν, οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνη,
ᾗ χρῆν σ' ἀρήγειν, εἰ φρονοῦσ' ἐτύγχανες·
ἐπεὶ πατὴρ σὸς οὗτος, ὃν θρηνεῖς ἀεί, 530

O chariot-race of Pelops old,
The source of sorrows manifold,
What endless curse hath fallen on us
Since to his sea-grave Myrtilus [1]
Sank from the golden chariot hurled;
Woe upon woe, of woes a world.

Enter CLYTEMNESTRA.

CLYTEMNESTRA

So once again I find thee here at large,
For he who kept thee close and so restrained
Thy scandalous tongue, Aegisthus, is away;
Yet thy complaints, repeated many a time
To many, censured my tyrannic rule—
The insults that I heaped on thee and thine.
Was it an insult if I paid in kind
The flouts and taunts wherewith thou girdest at me?
Thy father, the sole pretext of thy grief,
Died by my hand, aye mine, I know it well,
'Tis true beyond denial; yet not I,
Not I alone, but Justice slew him too:
And thou shouldst side with Justice, wert thou wise.
This sire of thine for whom thy tears still flow

[1] The charioteer of Oenomaüs. In the race for the hand of Hippodameia, the king's daughter, he betrayed his master by removing a linch-pin. Pelops won the race, but afterwards for an insult offered to his wife, he hurled into the sea Myrtilus, who invoked a dying curse on the house.

τὴν σὴν ὅμαιμον μοῦνος Ἑλλήνων ἔτλη
θῦσαι θεοῖσιν, οὐκ ἴσον καμὼν ἐμοὶ
λύπης, ὅς ἔσπειρ', ὥσπερ ἡ τίκτουσ' ἐγώ.
εἶεν, δίδαξον δή με τοῦ χάριν, τίνων
ἔθυσεν αὐτήν· πότερον Ἀργείων ἐρεῖς;
ἀλλ' οὐ μετῆν αὐτοῖσι τήν γ' ἐμὴν κτανεῖν.
ἀλλ' ἀντ' ἀδελφοῦ δῆτα Μενέλεω κτανὼν
τἄμ', οὐκ ἔμελλε τῶνδέ μοι δώσειν δίκην;
πότερον ἐκείνῳ παῖδες οὐκ ἦσαν διπλοῖ,
οὓς τῆσδε μᾶλλον εἰκὸς ἦν θνῄσκειν, πατρὸς 540
καὶ μητρὸς ὄντας, ἧς ὁ πλοῦς ὅδ' ἦν χάριν;
ἢ τῶν ἐμῶν Ἅιδης τιν' ἵμερον τέκνων
ἢ τῶν ἐκείνης ἔσχε δαίσασθαι πλέον;
ἢ τῷ πανώλει πατρὶ τῶν μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ
παίδων πόθος παρεῖτο, Μενέλεω δ' ἐνῆν;
οὐ ταῦτ' ἀβούλου καὶ κακοῦ γνώμην πατρός;
δοκῶ μέν, εἰ καὶ σῆς δίχα γνώμης λέγω·
φαίη δ' ἂν ἡ θανοῦσά γ', εἰ φωνὴν λάβοι.
ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν οὐκ εἰμὶ τοῖς πεπραγμένοις
δύσθυμος· εἰ δὲ σοὶ δοκῶ φρονεῖν κακῶς, 550
γνώμην δικαίαν σχοῦσα τοὺς πέλας ψέγε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐρεῖς μὲν οὐχὶ νῦν γέ μ' ὡς ἄρξασά τι
λυπηρὸν εἶτα σοῦ τάδ' ἐξήκουσ' ὕπο·
ἀλλ' ἢν ἐφῇς μοι, τοῦ τεθνηκότος θ' ὕπερ
λέξαιμ' ἂν ὀρθῶς τῆς κασιγνήτης θ' ὁμοῦ.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ἐφίημ'· εἰ δέ μ' ὧδ' ἀεὶ λόγους
ἐξῆρχες, οὐκ ἂν ἦσθα λυπηρὰ κλύειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι. πατέρα φῂς κτεῖναι. τίς ἂν
τούτου λόγος γένοιτ' ἂν αἴσχίων ἔτι,

Alone of all the Greeks could steel his heart
To yield thy sister as a sacrifice;
A father who begat her and ne'er felt
A mother's pangs of travail. Tell me now
Wherefore he offered her, on whose behalf?
The Greeks, thou sayest. And what right had they
To kill my child? For Menelaus' sake,
His brother? Should such pretext stay my hand?
Had not his brother children twain to serve
As victims? Should not they, as born of sire
And mother for whose sake the host embarked,
Have been preferred before my innocent child?
Had Death forsooth some craving for my child
Rather than hers? or had the wretch, her sire,
A tender heart for Menelaus' brood,
And for my flesh and blood no tenderness?
That choice was for a father rash and base;
So, though I differ from thee, I opine,
And could the dead maid speak, she would agree.
I therefore view the past without remorse,
And if to thee I seem perverted, clear
Thy judgment ere thou makst thyself a judge.

ELECTRA

This time thou canst not say that I began
The quarrel or provoked thee. But if thou
Wilt give me leave, I fain would speak the truth
Regarding both my sister and my sire.

CLYTEMNESTRA

My leave is given, and, hadst thou always shown
This temper, I had listened without pain.

ELECTRA

Hear then. Thou say'st, "I slew thy father." Who
Could well avow a blacker crime than that?

εἴτ' οὖν δικαίως εἴτε μή; λέξω δέ σοι 560
ὡς οὐ δίκῃ γ' ἔκτεινας, ἀλλά σ' ἔσπασεν
πειθὼ κακοῦ πρὸς ἀνδρός, ᾧ τανῦν ξύνει.
ἐροῦ δὲ τὴν κυναγὸν Ἄρτεμιν, τίνος
ποινὰς τὰ πολλὰ πνεύματ' ἔσχ' ἐν Αὐλίδι·
ἢ 'γὼ φράσω· κείνης γὰρ οὐ θέμις μαθεῖν.
πατήρ ποθ' οὑμός, ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω, θεᾶς
παίζων κατ' ἄλσος ἐξεκίνησεν ποδοῖν
στικτὸν κεράστην ἔλαφον, οὗ κατὰ σφαγὰς
ἐκκομπάσας ἔπος τι τυγχάνει βαλών.
κἀκ τοῦδε μηνίσασα Λητῴα κόρη 570
κατεῖχ' Ἀχαιούς, ὡς πατὴρ ἀντίσταθμον
τοῦ θηρὸς ἐκθύσειε τὴν αὑτοῦ κόρην.
ὧδ' ἦν τὰ κείνης θύματ'· οὐ γὰρ ἦν λύσις
ἄλλη στρατῷ πρὸς οἶκον οὐδ' εἰς Ἴλιον.
ἀνθ' ὧν, βιασθεὶς πολλὰ κἀντιβάς, μόλις
ἔθυσεν αὐτήν, οὐχὶ Μενέλεω χάριν.
εἰ δ' οὖν, ἐρῶ γὰρ καὶ τὸ σόν, κεῖνον θέλων
ἐπωφελῆσαι ταῦτ' ἔδρα, τούτου θανεῖν
χρῆν αὐτὸν οὕνεκ' ἐκ σέθεν; ποίῳ νόμῳ;
ὅρα τιθεῖσα τόνδε τὸν νόμον βροτοῖς 580
μὴ πῆμα σαυτῇ καὶ μετάγνοιαν τιθῇς.
εἰ γὰρ κτενοῦμεν ἄλλον ἀντ' ἄλλου, σύ τοι
πρώτη θάνοις ἄν, εἰ δίκης γε τυγχάνοις.
ἀλλ' εἰσόρα μὴ σκῆψιν οὐκ οὖσαν τίθῃς.
εἰ γὰρ θέλεις, δίδαξον ἀνθ' ὅτου τανῦν
αἴσχιστα πάντων ἔργα δρῶσα τυγχάνεις,
ἥτις ξυνεύδεις τῷ παλαμναίῳ, μεθ' οὗ
πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν πρόσθεν ἐξαπώλεσας,
καὶ παιδοποιεῖς, τοὺς δὲ πρόσθεν εὐσεβεῖς
κἀξ εὐσεβῶν βλαστόντας ἐκβαλοῦσ' ἔχεις. 590
πῶς ταῦτ' ἐπαινέσαιμ' ἄν; ἢ καὶ ταῦτ' ἐρεῖς

Justly or not, what matters? But I'll prove
There was no justice in it; 'twas the lure
Of a vile wretch that hurried thee along,—
Thy lover's. Ask the Huntress Artemis
For what offence she prisoned every gust
That blows at Aulis; rather, as from her
Thou mayst not win an answer, I will tell thee.
My father once—so have I heard the tale—
Taking his pleasure in her sacred glade
Started an antlered stag with dappled hide,
Shot it, and shooting made some careless vaunt
Latona's daughter, wroth thereat, detained
The Achaeans, that in quittance for her hart
My sire might give his daughter, life for life.
And so it came to pass that she was slain:
The fleet becalmed no other way could win
Homeward or Troyward. For that cause alone
Reluctantly, by hard constraint, at last
He slew her, no wise for his brother's sake.
But if, as thou interpretest the deed,
'Twas done to please his brother, even thus
Should he for that have died by hand of thine?
What law is this? In laying down such law
See that against thyself thou lay not up
Dire retribution; for if blood for blood
Be justice, thou wouldst justly die the first.
Look, if thy pleading be not all a lie,
Say, if thou wilt, why thou art living now
A life of shame as partner of his bed,
The wretch who aided thee to slay my sire,
Bearing him children, casting out for them
The rightful heirs in rightful wedlock born.
Can I approve such acts, admit that this,

ὡς τῆς θυγατρὸς ἀντίποινα λαμβάνεις;
αἰσχρῶς δ', ἐάν περ καὶ λέγῃς· οὐ γὰρ καλὸν
ἐχθροῖς γαμεῖσθαι τῆς θυγατρὸς οὕνεκα.
ἀλλ' οὐ γὰρ οὐδὲ νουθετεῖν ἔξεστί σε,
ἣ πᾶσαν ἵης γλῶσσαν ὡς τὴν μητέρα
κακοστομοῦμεν. καί σ' ἔγωγε δεσπότιν
ἢ μητέρ' οὐκ ἔλασσον εἰς ἡμᾶς νέμω,
ἣ ζῶ βίον μοχθηρόν, ἔκ τε σοῦ κακοῖς
πολλοῖς ἀεὶ ξυνοῦσα τοῦ τε συννόμου· 600
ὁ δ' ἄλλος ἔξω, χεῖρα σὴν μόλις φυγών,
τλήμων Ὀρέστης δυστυχῆ τρίβει βίον·
ὃν πολλὰ δή με σοὶ τρέφειν μιάστορα
ἐπῃτιάσω· καὶ τόδ', εἴπερ ἔσθενον,
ἔδρων ἄν, εὖ τοῦτ' ἴσθι· τοῦδέ γ' οὕνεκα
κήρυσσέ μ' εἰς ἅπαντας, εἴτε χρῇς κακὴν
εἴτε στόμαργον εἴτ' ἀναιδείας πλέαν.
εἰ γὰρ πέφυκα τῶνδε τῶν ἔργων ἴδρις,
σχεδόν τι τὴν σὴν οὐ καταισχύνω φύσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὁρῶ μένος πνέουσαν· εἰ δὲ σὺν δίκῃ 610
ξύνεστι, τοῦδε φροντίδ' οὐκέτ' εἰσορῶ.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ποίας δ' ἐμοὶ δεῖ πρός γε τήνδε φροντίδος,
ἥτις τοιαῦτα τὴν τεκοῦσαν ὕβρισεν,
καὶ ταῦτα τηλικοῦτος; ἆρά σοι δοκεῖ
χωρεῖν ἂν εἰς πᾶν ἔργον αἰσχύνης ἄτερ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εὖ νυν ἐπίστω τῶνδέ μ' αἰσχύνην ἔχειν,
κεἰ μὴ δοκῶ σοι· μανθάνω δ' ὁθούνεκα
ἔξωρα πράσσω κοὐκ ἐμοὶ προσεικότα.
ἀλλ' ἡ γὰρ ἐκ σοῦ δυσμένεια καὶ τὰ σὰ

This too was vengeance for a daughter's blood?
A shameful plea, if urged, for shame it is
To wed a foeman for a daughter's sake.
But in convincing thee I waste my breath;
Thou hast no answer but to scream that I
Revile a mother; and in sooth to us
Thou art mistress more than mother, for I pine
A wretched drudge, by thee and by thy mate
Downtrodden; and that other child who scarce
Escaped thy hands, Orestes, wears away
In weary exile his unhappy days.
Oft hast thou taxed me that I reared him up
For vengeance; so I willed it, had I power.
Go to, proclaim me out of my own mouth
A shrew, a scold, a vixen—what thou wilt.
For if I be accomplished in such arts,
Methinks I show my breed, a trick o' the blood.

CHORUS

I see she breathes forth fury and no more
Heeds if her words with justice harmonize.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Why then should *I* heed one who thus insults
A mother, at her ripe age too? Dost think
That she would stick at any deed of shame?

ELECTRA

Nay, I am shamefast, though to thee I seem
Shameless; I know such manners in a maid
Are ill-becoming, in a daughter strange;

ἔργ' ἐξαναγκάζει με ταῦτα δρᾶν βίᾳ· 620
αἰσχροῖς γὰρ αἰσχρὰ πράγματ' ἐκδιδάσκεται.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ θρέμμ' ἀναιδές, ἦ σ' ἐγὼ καὶ τἄμ' ἔπη
καὶ τἄργα τἀμὰ πόλλ' ἄγαν λέγειν ποεῖ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σύ τοι λέγεις νιν, οὐκ ἐγώ· σὺ γὰρ ποεῖς
τοὔργον· τὰ δ' ἔργα τοὺς λόγους εὑρίσκεται.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ τὴν δέσποιναν Ἄρτεμιν θράσους
τοῦδ' οὐκ ἀλύξεις, εὖτ' ἂν Αἴγισθος μόλῃ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁρᾷς; πρὸς ὀργὴν ἐκφέρει, μεθεῖσά μοι
λέγειν ἃ χρῄζοιμ', οὐδ' ἐπίστασαι κλύειν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὔκουν ἐάσεις οὐδ' ὑπ' εὐφήμου βοῆς 630
θῦσαί μ', ἐπειδὴ σοί γ' ἐφῆκα πᾶν λέγειν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐῶ, κελεύω, θῦε· μηδ' ἐπαιτιῶ
τοὐμὸν στόμ', ὡς οὐκ ἂν πέρα λέξαιμ' ἔτι.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἔπαιρε δὴ σὺ θύμαθ' ἡ παροῦσά μοι
πάγκαρπ', ἄνακτι τῷδ' ὅπως λυτηρίους
εὐχὰς ἀνάσχω δειμάτων, ἃ νῦν ἔχω.
κλύοις ἂν ἤδη, Φοῖβε προστατήριε,
κεκρυμμένην μου βάξιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐν φίλοις
ὁ μῦθος, οὐδὲ πᾶν ἀναπτύξαι πρέπει
πρὸς φῶς παρούσης τῆσδε πλησίας ἐμοί, 640
μὴ σὺν φθόνῳ τε καὶ πολυγλώσσῳ βοῇ
σπείρῃ ματαίαν βάξιν εἰς πᾶσαν πόλιν.
ἀλλ' ὧδ' ἄκουε· τῇδε γὰρ κἀγὼ φράσω.

But thy malignity, thy cruel acts
Compel me; baseness is from baseness learnt.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Thou brazen monster! I, my words, my acts,
Are matter for thy glib garrulity!

ELECTRA

The fault is thine, not mine; for thine the acts,
And mine are but the words that show them forth.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Now, by our lady Artemis, thou shalt rue
Thy boldness when Aegisthus comes again.

ELECTRA

See, rage distracts thee; first thou grantest me
Free speech, and wilt not listen when I speak.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I let thee have thy say, and wilt not thou
Hush thy wild tongue and let me sacrifice?

ELECTRA

Go, I adjure thee, sacrifice; nor blame
My voice; henceforth I shall not speak one word.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Bear this, my maid, this offering of earth's fruits,
That to our King I may uplift my prayers,
To rid me of the dread that haunts my soul.
O Phoebus, our Defender, lend an ear
To my petition; dark and veiled the words
For those who love me not, nor were it meet
To lay my whole heart bare, while she is by,
Ready to blab with her envenomed tongue
Through all the town some empty, rash report.
Darkly I pray; to my dark prayer attend!

ἃ γὰρ προσεῖδον νυκτὶ τῇδε φάσματα
δισσῶν ὀνείρων, ταῦτά μοι, Λύκει' ἄναξ,
εἰ μὲν πέφηνεν ἐσθλά, δὸς τελεσφόρα,
εἰ δ' ἐχθρά, τοῖς ἐχθροῖσιν ἔμπαλιν μέθες·
καὶ μή με πλούτου τοῦ παρόντος εἴ τινες
δόλοισι βουλεύουσιν ἐκβαλεῖν, ἐφῇς,
ἀλλ' ὧδέ μ' αἰεὶ ζῶσαν ἀβλαβεῖ βίῳ 650
δόμους Ἀτρειδῶν σκῆπτρά τ' ἀμφέπειν τάδε,
φίλοισί τε ξυνοῦσαν οἷς ξύνειμι νῦν
εὐημεροῦσαν καὶ τέκνων ὅσων ἐμοὶ
δύσνοια μὴ πρόσεστιν ἢ λύπη πικρά.
ταῦτ', ὦ Λύκει' Ἄπολλον, ἵλεως κλύων
δὸς πᾶσιν ἡμῖν ὥσπερ ἐξαιτούμεθα.
τὰ δ' ἄλλα πάντα καὶ σιωπώσης ἐμοῦ
ἐπαξιῶ σε δαίμον' ὄντ' ἐξειδέναι·
τοὺς ἐκ Διὸς γὰρ εἰκός ἐστι πάνθ' ὁρᾶν.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ξέναι γυναῖκες, πῶς ἂν εἰδείην σαφῶς 660
εἰ τοῦ τυράννου δώματ' Αἰγίσθου τάδε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τάδ' ἐστίν, ὦ ξέν'· αὐτὸς ᾔκασας καλῶς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἦ καὶ δάμαρτα τήνδ' ἐπεικάζων κυρῶ
κείνου; πρέπει γὰρ ὡς τύραννος εἰσορᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μάλιστα πάντων· ἥδε σοι κείνη πάρα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὦ χαῖρ', ἄνασσα· σοὶ φέρων ἥκω λόγους
ἡδεῖς φίλου παρ' ἀνδρὸς Αἰγίσθῳ θ' ὁμοῦ.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἐδεξάμην τὸ ῥηθέν· εἰδέναι δέ σου
πρώτιστα χρῄζω τίς σ' ἀπέστειλεν βροτῶν.

The vision that I yesternight beheld
Of double import, if, Lycean King,
It bodes me well, fulfil it; but if ill,
May it upon my enemies recoil!
If there be some who treacherously plot
To dispossess me of my wealth and power,
Prevent them, and vouchsafe that I may rule
The house of Atreus in security,
And wield the sceptre, sharing prosperous days
With the same friends and with my children—those
By malice and blind rancour not estranged.
Grant, O Lycean Phoebus, of thy grace,
To me and mine fulfilment of my prayers.
And for those other things my heart desires,
Though unexpressed, thou as a god dost know them;
For naught is hidden from the sons of Zeus.

AGED SERVANT

Good ladies, might a stranger crave to learn
If this indeed be King Aegisthus' house?

CHORUS

It is, Sir; thou thyself hast guessed aright.

AGED SERVANT

And am I right conjecturing that I see
His royal consort here? She looks a queen.

CHORUS

Indeed thou art in presence of the queen.

AGED SERVANT

I greet thee, Madam, and I bear to thee
Fair news, and to Aegisthus, from a friend.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I welcome thy fair words, but first would know
Who sends thee.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

Φανοτεὺς ὁ Φωκεύς, πρᾶγμα πορσύνων μέγα. 670

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

τὸ ποῖον, ὦ ξέν'; εἰπέ· παρὰ φίλου γὰρ ὢν
ἀνδρός, σάφ' οἶδα, προσφιλεῖς λέξεις λόγους.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τέθνηκ' Ὀρέστης· ἐν βραχεῖ ξυνθεὶς λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἲ 'γὼ τάλαιν', ὄλωλα τῇδ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

τί φής, τί φής, ὦ ξεῖνε; μὴ ταύτης κλύε.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

θανόντ' Ὀρέστην νῦν τε καὶ πάλαι λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπωλόμην δύστηνος, οὐδέν εἰμ' ἔτι.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

σὺ μὲν τὰ σαυτῆς πρᾶσσ', ἐμοὶ δὲ σύ, ξένε,
τἀληθὲς εἰπέ, τῷ τρόπῳ διόλλυται;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

κἀπεμπόμην πρὸς ταῦτα καὶ τὸ πᾶν φράσω. 680
κεῖνος γὰρ ἐλθὼν εἰς τὸ κλεινὸν Ἑλλάδος
πρόσχημ' ἀγῶνος Δελφικῶν ἄθλων χάριν,
ὅτ' ᾔσθετ' ἀνδρὸς ὀρθίων κηρυγμάτων
δρόμον προκηρύξαντος, οὗ πρώτη κρίσις,
εἰσῆλθε λαμπρός, πᾶσι τοῖς ἐκεῖ σέβας·
δρόμου δ' ἰσώσας τἀφέσει[1] τὰ τέρματα
νίκης ἔχων ἐξῆλθε πάντιμον γέρας.
χὤπως μὲν ἐν πολλοῖσι παῦρά σοι λέγω
οὐκ οἶδα τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἔργα καὶ κράτη·
ἓν δ' ἴσθ'· ὅσων γὰρ εἰσεκήρυξαν βραβῆς 690

[1] τῇ φύσει MSS., Musgrave corr.

AGED SERVANT

Phanoteus, the Phocian,
On a grave mission.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Tell me, stranger, what.
It must be friendly coming from a friend.

AGED SERVANT

Orestes' death, to sum in brief my tale.

ELECTRA

Me miserable! Now am I undone.

CLYTEMNESTRA

What say'st thou, man, what say'st thou? Heed not her.

AGED SERVANT

I say again, Orestes is no more.

ELECTRA

Ah me, I'm lost, ah wretched me, undone!

CLYTEMNESTRA

Attend to thine own business. (*To* AGED SERVANT.) Tell me, Sir,
The circumstance and manner of his death.

AGED SERVANT

That was my errand, and I'll tell thee all.
To the great festival of Greece he went,
The Delphic Games, and when the herald's voice
Announced the opening trial, the foot race,
He stepped into the lists, a radiant form,
The admired of all beholders. Like a shaft
He sped from starting point to goal and back,
And bore the crown of glorious victory.
To speak in brief where there is much to tell,
I never heard of prowess like to his.

[δρόμων διαύλων πένταθλ' ἃ νομίζεται],[1]
τούτων ἐνεγκὼν πάντα τἀπινίκια
ὠλβίζετ', Ἀργεῖος μὲν ἀνακαλούμενος,
ὄνομα δ' Ὀρέστης, τοῦ τὸ κλεινὸν Ἑλλάδος
Ἀγαμέμνονος στράτευμ' ἀγείραντός ποτε.
καὶ ταῦτα μὲν τοιαῦθ'· ὅταν δέ τις θεῶν
βλάπτῃ, δύναιτ' ἂν οὐδ' ἂν ἰσχύων φυγεῖν.
κεῖνος γὰρ ἄλλης ἡμέρας, ὅθ' ἱππικῶν
ἦν ἡλίου τέλλοντος ὠκύπους ἀγών,
εἰσῆλθε πολλῶν ἁρματηλατῶν μέτα. 700
εἷς ἦν Ἀχαιός, εἷς ἀπὸ Σπάρτης, δύο
Λίβυες ζυγωτῶν ἁρμάτων ἐπιστάται·
κἀκεῖνος ἐν τούτοισι, Θεσσαλὰς ἔχων
ἵππους, ὁ πέμπτος· ἕκτος ἐξ Αἰτωλίας
ξανθαῖσι πώλοις· ἕβδομος Μάγνης ἀνήρ·
ὁ δ' ὄγδοος λεύκιππος, Αἰνιὰν γένος·
ἔνατος Ἀθηνῶν τῶν θεοδμήτων ἄπο·
Βοιωτὸς ἄλλος, δέκατον ἐκπληρῶν ὄχον.
στάντες δ' ἵν' αὐτοὺς οἱ τεταγμένοι βραβῆς
κλήροις ἔπηλαν καὶ κατέστησαν δίφρους, 710
χαλκῆς ὑπαὶ σάλπιγγος ᾖξαν· οἱ δ' ἅμα
ἵπποις ὁμοκλήσαντες ἡνίας χεροῖν
ἔσεισαν· ἐν δὲ πᾶς ἐμεστώθη δρόμος
κτύπου κροτητῶν ἁρμάτων· κόνις δ' ἄνω
φορεῖθ'· ὁμοῦ δὲ πάντες ἀναμεμιγμένοι
φείδοντο κέντρων οὐδέν, ὡς ὑπερβάλοι
χνόας τις αὐτῶν καὶ φρυάγμαθ' ἱππικά.
ὁμοῦ γὰρ ἀμφὶ νῶτα καὶ τροχῶν βάσεις
ἤφριζον, εἰσέβαλλον ἱππικαὶ πνοαί.
κεῖνος δ' ὑπ' αὐτὴν ἐσχάτην στήλην ἔχων 720

[1] Jebb with most critics rejects the line and alters τούτων in next line to ἄθλων.

This much I'll add, the judges of the games
Announced no single contest wherein he
Was not the victor, and each time glad shouts
Hailed the award—'An Argive wins, Orestes,
The son of Agamemnon, King of men,
Who led the hosts of Hellas.' So he sped.
But when some angry godhead intervenes
The mightiest man is foiled. Another day,
When at sunsetting chariots vied in speed,
He entered; many were the charioteers.
From Sparta one, and one Achaean, two
From Libya, skilled to guide the yokèd team;
The fifth in rank, with mares of Thessaly,
Orestes came, and an Aeolian sixth,
With chestnut fillies, a Megarian seventh,
The eighth, with milk-white steeds, an Aenian,
The ninth from Athens, city built by gods;
Last a Boeotian made the field of ten.
Then, as the appointed umpires signed to each
By lot his place, they ranged their chariots,
And at the trumpet's brazen signal all
Started, all shook the reins and urged their steeds
With shouts; the whole plain echoed with a din
Of rattling cars and the dust rose to heaven.
They drave together, all in narrow space,
And plied their goads, each keen to leave behind
The press of whirling wheels and snorting steeds,
For each man saw his car beflecked with foam
Or felt the coursers' hot breath at his back.
Orestes, as he rounded either goal,

ἔχριμπτ᾽ ἀεὶ σύριγγα, δεξιὸν δ᾽ ἀνεὶς
σειραῖον ἵππον εἶργε τὸν προσκείμενον.
καὶ πρὶν μὲν ὀρθοὶ πάντες ἕστασαν δίφροι·
ἔπειτα δ᾽ Αἰνιᾶνος ἀνδρὸς ἄστομοι
πῶλοι βίᾳ φέρουσιν· ἐκ δ᾽ ὑποστροφῆς
τελοῦντες ἕκτον ἕβδομόν τ᾽ ἤδη δρόμον
μέτωπα συμπαίουσι Βαρκαίοις ὄχοις·
κἀντεῦθεν ἄλλος ἄλλον ἐξ ἑνὸς κακοῦ
ἔθραυε κἀνέπιπτε, πᾶν δ᾽ ἐπίμπλατο
ναυαγίων Κρισαῖον ἱππικῶν πέδον. 730
γνοὺς δ᾽ οὑξ Ἀθηνῶν δεινὸς ἡνιοστρόφος
ἔξω παρασπᾷ κἀνακωχεύει παρεὶς
κλύδων᾽ ἔφιππον ἐν μέσῳ κυκώμενον.
ἤλαυνε δ᾽ ἔσχατος μέν, ὑστέρας δ᾽ ἔχων
πώλους Ὀρέστης, τῷ τέλει πίστιν φέρων·
ὅπως δ᾽ ὁρᾷ μόνον νιν ἐλλελειμμένον,
ὀξὺν δι᾽ ὤτων κέλαδον ἐνσείσας θοαῖς
πώλοις διώκει, κἀξισώσαντε ζυγὰ
ἠλαυνέτην, τότ᾽ ἄλλος, ἄλλοθ᾽ ἅτερος
κάρα προβάλλων ἱππικῶν ὀχημάτων. 740
καὶ τοὺς μὲν ἄλλους πάντας ἀσφαλεῖς δρόμους
ὠρμᾶθ᾽ ὁ τλήμων ὀρθὸς ἐξ ὀρθῶν δίφρων·
ἔπειτα λύων ἡνίαν ἀριστερὰν
κάμπτοντος ἵππου λανθάνει στήλην ἄκραν
παίσας· ἔθραυσε δ᾽ ἄξονος μέσας χνόας
κἀξ ἀντύγων ὤλισθεν· ἐν δ᾽ ἑλίσσεται
τμητοῖς ἱμᾶσι· τοῦ δὲ πίπτοντος πέδῳ
πῶλοι διεσπάρησαν ἐς μέσον δρόμον.
στρατὸς δ᾽ ὅπως ὁρᾷ νιν ἐκπεπτωκότα
δίφρων, ἀνωλόλυξε τὸν νεανίαν, 750
οἷ᾽ ἔργα δράσας οἷα λαγχάνει κακά,
φορούμενος πρὸς οὖδας, ἄλλοτ᾽ οὐρανῷ

Steered close and shaved the pillar with his nave,
Urging his offside trace-horse, while he checked
The nearer. For a while they all sped on
Unscathed, but soon the Aenian's hard-mouthed steeds
Bolted, and 'twixt the sixth and seventh round
'Gainst the Barcaean chariot headlong dashed.
Then on that first mishap there followed close
Shock upon shock, crash upon crash, that strewed
With wrack of cars all the Crisaean plain.
This the shrewd charioteer of Athens marked,
Slackened and drew aside, letting go by
The surge of chariots running in mid course.
Last came Orestes who had curbed his team
(He trusted to the finish), but at sight
Of the Athenian, his one rival left,
With a shrill holloa in his horses' ears
He followed ; and the two abreast raced on,
Now one, and now the other a head in front.
Thus far Orestes, ill-starred youth, had steered
Steadfast at every lap his steadfast team,
But at the last, in turning, all too soon
He loosed the left-hand rein, and ere he knew it
The axle struck against the pillar's edge.
The axle box was shattered, and himself
Hurled o'er the chariot rail, and in his fall
Caught in the reins' grip he was dragged along,
While his scared team dashed wildly o'er the course
But as the crowd beheld his overthrow,
There rose a wail of pity for the youth—
His doughty deeds and his disastrous end—
Now flung to earth, now bounding to the sky
Feet uppermost. At length the charioteers

σκέλη προφαίνων, ἔς τέ νιν διφρηλάται,
μόλις κατασχεθόντες ἱππικὸν δρόμον,
ἔλυσαν αἱματηρόν, ὥστε μηδένα
γνῶναι φίλων ἰδόντ᾽ ἂν ἄθλιον δέμας.
καί νιν πυρᾷ κέαντες εὐθὺς ἐν βραχεῖ
χαλκῷ μέγιστον σῶμα δειλαίας σποδοῦ
φέρουσιν ἄνδρες Φωκέων τεταγμένοι,
ὅπως πατρῴας τύμβον ἐκλάχῃ χθονός. 760
τοιαῦτά σοι ταῦτ᾽ ἐστίν, ὡς μὲν ἐν λόγῳ
ἀλγεινά, τοῖς δ᾽ ἰδοῦσιν, οἵπερ εἴδομεν,
μέγιστα πάντων ὧν ὄπωπ᾽ ἐγὼ κακῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ φεῦ· τὸ πᾶν δὴ δεσπόταισι τοῖς πάλαι
πρόρριζον, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἔφθαρται γένος.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί ταῦτα, πότερον εὐτυχῆ λέγω,
ἢ δεινὰ μέν, κέρδη δέ; λυπηρῶς δ᾽ ἔχει,
εἰ τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς τὸν βίον σῴζω κακοῖς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τί δ᾽ ὧδ᾽ ἀθυμεῖς, ὦ γύναι, τῷ νῦν λόγῳ;

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

δεινὸν τὸ τίκτειν ἐστίν· οὐδὲ γὰρ κακῶς 770
πάσχοντι μῖσος ὧν τέκῃ προσγίγνεται.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

μάτην ἄρ᾽ ἡμεῖς, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἥκομεν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὔτοι μάτην γε· πῶς γὰρ ἂν μάτην λέγοις,
εἴ μοι θανόντος πίστ᾽ ἔχων τεκμήρια
προσῆλθες, ὅστις τῆς ἐμῆς ψυχῆς γεγώς,
μαστῶν ἀποστὰς καὶ τροφῆς ἐμῆς, φυγὰς
ἀπεξενοῦτο καί μ᾽, ἐπεὶ τῆσδε χθονὸς
ἐξῆλθεν, οὐκέτ᾽ εἶδεν, ἐγκαλῶν δέ μοι

Stayed in their wild career his steeds and freed
The corpse all blood-bestained, disfigured, marred
Past recognition of his nearest friend.
Straightway the Phoceans burnt him on a pyre,
And envoys now are on their way to bring
That mighty frame shut in a little urn,
And lay his ashes in his fatherland.
Such is my tale, right piteous to tell;
But for all those who saw it with their eyes,
As I, there never was a sadder sight.

CHORUS

Alas, alas! our ancient masters' line,
So it appears, hath perished root and branch.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Are these glad tidings? Rather would I say
Sad, but of profit. Ah how hard my lot
When I must look for safety to my losses.

AGED SERVANT

Why, lady, why downhearted at my news?

CLYTEMNESTRA

Strange is the force of motherhood; a mother,
Whate'er her wrongs, can ne'er forget her child.

AGED SERVANT

So it would seem our coming was in vain.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Nay, not in vain. How canst thou say "in vain,"
If of his death thou bringst convincing proof,
Who from my life drew life, and yet, estranged,
Forgat the breasts that suckled him, forgat
A mother's tender nurture, fled his home,
And since that day has never seen me more,

φόνους πατρῴους δείν' ἐπηπείλει τελεῖν;
ὥστ' οὔτε νυκτὸς ὕπνον οὔτ' ἐξ ἡμέρας
ἐμὲ στεγάζειν ἡδύν, ἀλλ' ὁ προστατῶν 780
χρόνος διῆγέ μ' αἰὲν ὡς θανουμένην.
νῦν δ'—ἡμέρᾳ γὰρ τῇδ' ἀπήλλαγμαι φόβου
πρὸς τῆσδ' ἐκείνου θ'· ἥδε γὰρ μείζων βλάβη
ξύνοικος ἦν μοι, τοὐμὸν ἐκπίνουσ' ἀεὶ
ψυχῆς ἄκρατον αἷμα—νῦν δ' ἕκηλά που
τῶν τῆσδ' ἀπειλῶν οὕνεχ' ἡμερεύσομεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαινα· νῦν γὰρ οἰμῶξαι πάρα,
'Ορέστα, τὴν σὴν ξυμφοράν, ὅθ' ὧδ' ἔχων
πρὸς τῆσδ' ὑβρίζει μητρός. ἆρ' ἔχει καλῶς; 790

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὔτοι σύ· κεῖνος δ' ὡς ἔχει καλῶς ἔχει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄκουε, Νέμεσι τοῦ θανόντος ἀρτίως.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἤκουσεν ὧν δεῖ κἀπεκύρωσεν καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὕβριζε· νῦν γὰρ εὐτυχοῦσα τυγχάνεις.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οὔκουν 'Ορέστης καὶ σὺ παύσετον τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πεπαύμεθ' ἡμεῖς, οὐχ ὅπως σὲ παύσομεν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

πολλῶν ἂν ἥκοις, ὦ ξέν', ἄξιος τυχεῖν,
εἰ τήνδ' ἔπαυσας τῆς πολυγλώσσου βοῆς.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

οὐκοῦν ἀποστείχοιμ' ἄν, εἰ τάδ' εὖ κυρεῖ.

Slandered me as the murderer of his sire
And breathed forth vengeance?—Neither night nor
day
Kind slumber closed these eyes, and immanent dread
Of death each minute stretched me on the rack.
But now on this glad day, of terror rid
From him and her, a deadlier plague than he,
That vampire who was housed with me to drain
My very life blood—now, despite her threats
Methinks that I shall pass my days in peace.

ELECTRA

Ah woe is me! now verily may I mourn
Thy fate, Orestes, when thou farest thus,
Mocked by thy mother in death! Is it not well?

CLYTEMNESTRA

Not well with thee, but it is well with him.

ELECTRA

Hear her, Avenging Spirit of the dead
Whose ashes still are warm!

CLYTEMNESTRA

The Avenger heard
When it behoved her, and hath ruled it well.

ELECTRA

This is thine hour of victory; mock on.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Thou and Orestes then should silence me.

ELECTRA

We silence thee! We who are silent, both!

CLYTEMNESTRA

Thy coming, Sir, would merit large reward,
If thou indeed hast stopped her wagging tongue.

AGED SERVANT

Then I may take my leave, if all is well.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ἥκιστ᾽· ἐπείπερ οὔτ᾽ ἐμοῦ κατάξι᾽ ἂν 800
πράξειας οὔτε τοῦ πορεύσαντος ξένου.
ἀλλ᾽ εἴσιθ᾽ εἴσω· τήνδε δ᾽ ἔκτοθεν βοᾶν
ἔα τά θ᾽ αὑτῆς καὶ τὰ τῶν φίλων κακά.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἆρ᾽ ὑμὶν ὡς ἀλγοῦσα κὠδυνωμένη
δεινῶς δακρῦσαι κἀπικωκῦσαι δοκεῖ
τὸν υἱὸν ἡ δύστηνος ὧδ᾽ ὀλωλότα;
ἀλλ᾽ ἐγγελῶσα φροῦδος. ὢ τάλαιν᾽ ἐγώ.
Ὀρέστα φίλταθ᾽, ὥς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσας θανών.
ἀποσπάσας γὰρ τῆς ἐμῆς οἴχει φρενὸς
αἵ μοι μόναι παρῆσαν ἐλπίδων ἔτι, 810
σὲ πατρὸς ἥξειν ζῶντα τιμωρόν ποτε
κἀμοῦ ταλαίνης. νῦν δὲ ποῖ με χρὴ μολεῖν;
μόνη γάρ εἰμι, σοῦ τ᾽ ἀπεστερημένη
καὶ πατρός. ἤδη δεῖ με δουλεύειν πάλιν
ἐν τοῖσιν ἐχθίστοισιν ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ
φονεῦσι πατρός. ἆρά μοι καλῶς ἔχει;
ἀλλ᾽ οὔ τι μὴν ἔγωγε τοῦ λοιποῦ χρόνου
ξύνοικος, εἴσειμ᾽,[1] ἀλλὰ τῇδε πρὸς πύλῃ
παρεῖσ᾽ ἐμαυτὴν ἄφιλος αὐανῶ βίον.
πρὸς ταῦτα καινέτω τις, εἰ βαρύνεται, 820
τῶν ἔνδον ὄντων· ὡς χάρις μέν, ἢν κτάνῃ,
λύπη δ᾽, ἐὰν ζῶ· τοῦ βίου δ᾽ οὐδεὶς πόθος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ στρ. α᾽

ποῦ ποτε κεραυνοὶ Διὸς ἢ ποῦ φαέθων
Ἅλιος, εἰ ταῦτ᾽ ἐφορῶντες κρύπτουσιν ἕκηλοι;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἒ ἔ, αἰαῖ.

[1] ἔσσομ᾽ MSS., Hermann corr.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Not so; such entertainment would reflect
On me and on thy master, my ally.
Be pleased to enter; leave this girl without
To wail her friends' misfortunes and her own.
[*Exeunt* CLYTEMNESTRA *and* AGED SERVANT.

ELECTRA

Seemed she to you a mother woe-begone,
Weeping and wailing for a son thus slain,
This miserable woman? No, she left us
With mocking laughter. Dearest brother mine,
Thy death was my death warrant. Woe is me!
With thee has gone my last fond hope, that thou
Wast living yet and wouldst return some day
To avenge my sire and me, unhappy me.
Now whither shall I turn, alone, bereft
Of thee and of my sire? Henceforth again
Must I be slave to those I most abhor,
My father's murderers. Is it not well with me?
No, never will I cross their threshold more,
But at these gates will lay me down to die,
There pine away. If any in the house
Think me an eyesore, let him slay me; life
To me were misery and death a boon.

CHORUS (*Str.* 1)

Where, O Zeus, are thy bolts, O Sun-god, where is thy ray,
If with thy lightning, thy light, these things be not shewn to the day?

ELECTRA

Ah me! Ah me!

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ παῖ, τί δακρύεις;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μηδὲν μέγ' ἀΰσῃς. 830

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπολεῖς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰ τῶν φανερῶς οἰχομένων
εἰς Ἀΐδαν ἐλπίδ' ὑποίσεις, κατ' ἐμοῦ τακομένας
μᾶλλον ἐπεμβάσει.

ΧΟΡΟΣ ἀντ. α'

οἶδα γὰρ ἄνακτ' Ἀμφιάρεων χρυσοδέτοις
ἕρκεσι κρυφθέντα γυναικῶν· καὶ νῦν ὑπὸ γαίας

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἒ ἔ, ἰώ. 840

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πάμψυχος ἀνάσσει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φεῦ δῆτ'· ὀλοὰ γὰρ

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐδάμη.

CHORUS

Daughter, why weepest thou?

ELECTRA

Woe!

CHORUS

Hush! No rash cry!

ELECTRA

Thou'lt be my death.

CHORUS

What meanest thou?

ELECTRA

If ye would whisper hope
That they we know for dead may be alive;
Ye trample on a bleeding heart.

CHORUS

Nay, I bethink me how (*Ant.* 1)
The Argive seer[1] was swallowed up,
Snared by a woman for a golden chain,
And now in the nether world—

ELECTRA

Ah me!

CHORUS

A living soul he reigns.

ELECTRA

Ah woe!

CHORUS

Aye woe! for the murderess—

ELECTRA

Was slain.

[1] Amphiaraus. Induced by his wife Eriphyle to join the expedition of Polyneices against Argos, he was swallowed up by an earthquake. His son (like Orestes) avenged his father and Amphiaraus was honoured as an earth-god.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ναί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶδ' οἶδ'· ἐφάνη γὰρ μέλετωρ
ἀμφὶ τὸν ἐν πένθει· ἐμοὶ δ' οὔτις ἔτ' ἔσθ'· ὃς γὰρ
ἔτ' ἦν,
φροῦδος ἀναρπασθείς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δειλαία δειλαίων κυρεῖς. στρ. β'

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κἀγὼ τοῦδ' ἴστωρ, ὑπερίστωρ, 850
πανσύρτῳ παμμήνῳ πολλῶν
δεινῶν στυγνῶν τ' αἰῶνι.[1]

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἴδομεν ἁθρήνεις.[2]

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μή μέ νυν μηκέτι
παραγάγῃς, ἵν' οὐ

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί φῄς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάρεισιν ἐλπίδων ἔτι κοινοτόκων
εὐπατριδᾶν ἀρωγαί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πᾶσι θνατοῖς ἔφυ μόρος. ἀντ. β' 860

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ καὶ χαλάργοις ἐν ἁμίλλαις
οὕτως, ὡς κείνῳ δυστάνῳ,
τμητοῖς ὁλκοῖς ἐγκῦρσαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄσκοπος ἁ λώβα.

[1] ἀχέων MSS., Hermann corr. [2] ἃ θροεῖς MSS., Dindorf corr.

CHORUS

Aye, slain.

ELECTRA

I know, I know. A champion was raised up
To avenge the mourning ghost.
No champion for me,
The one yet left is taken, reft away.

CHORUS

A weary, weary lot is thine. (*Str.* 2)

ELECTRA

I know it well, too well,
When life, month in month out,
Like a dark torrent flows,
Horror on horror, pain on pain.

CHORUS

We have watched its tearful course.

ELECTRA

Cease then to turn it where—

CHORUS

What wouldst thou say?

ELECTRA

No comfort's left of hope
From him of royal blood,
Sprung from one stock with me.

CHORUS

Death is the common lot. (*Ant.* 2)

ELECTRA

To die as he died, hapless youth,
Entangled in the reins
Beneath the tramp of coursers' hoofs!

CHORUS

Torture ineffable!

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς γὰρ οὔκ; εἰ ξένος
ἄτερ ἐμᾶν χερῶν

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παπαῖ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κέκευθεν, οὔτε του τάφου ἀντιάσας
οὔτε γόων παρ' ἡμῶν. 870

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὑφ' ἡδονῆς τοι, φιλτάτη, διώκομαι
τὸ κόσμιον μεθεῖσα σὺν τάχει μολεῖν·
φέρω γὰρ ἡδονάς τε κἀνάπαυλαν ὧν
πάροιθεν εἶχες καὶ κατέστενες κακῶν

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πόθεν δ' ἂν εὕροις τῶν ἐμῶν σὺ πημάτων
ἄρηξιν, οἷς ἴασιν οὐκ ἔνεστ' ἰδεῖν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πάρεστ' Ὀρέστης ἡμίν, ἴσθι τοῦτ' ἐμοῦ
κλύουσ', ἐναργῶς, ὥσπερ εἰσορᾷς ἐμέ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἦ μέμηνας, ὦ τάλαινα, κἀπὶ τοῖς
σαυτῆς κακοῖσι κἀπὶ τοῖς ἐμοῖς γελᾷς; 880

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μὰ τὴν πατρῴαν ἑστίαν, ἀλλ' οὐχ ὕβρει
λέγω τάδ', ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνον ὡς παρόντα νῷν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαινα· καὶ τίνος βροτῶν λόγον
τόνδ' εἰσακούσασ' ὧδε πιστεύεις ἄγαν;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ τε κοὐκ ἄλλης, σαφῆ
σημεῖ' ἰδοῦσα, τῷδε πιστεύω λόγῳ.

ELECTRA

Yea, in a strange land far away—

CHORUS

Alas!

ELECTRA

To lie untended by my hands,
Unwept, ungraced with sepulture by me!

Enter CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Joy, dearest sister, sped me hitherward,
And haply with unseemly haste I ran
To bring the joyful tidings and relief
From all thy woes and weary sufferings.

ELECTRA

And where canst *thou* have found a remedy
For irremediable woes like mine?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Orestes—hear it from my lips—is here,
In bodily presence, as thou see'st me now.

ELECTRA

Art mad, poor sister, making mockery
Of thine own misery and mine withal?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I mock not, by our father's hearth I swear it;
In very truth we have him here again.

ELECTRA

O misery! And, prithee, from whose mouth
Hadst thou this tale so blindly credited?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I trusted to none other than myself,
The clearest proof and evidence of my eyes.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίν', ὦ τάλαιν', ἔχουσα πίστιν; ἐς τί μοι
βλέψασα θάλπει τῷδ' ἀνηκέστῳ πυρί;

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πρός νυν θεῶν ἄκουσον, ὡς μαθοῦσά μου
τὸ λοιπὸν ἢ φρονοῦσαν ἢ μωρὰν λέγῃς. 890

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

σὺ δ' οὖν λέγ', εἴ σοι τῷ λόγῳ τις ἡδονή.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ δὴ λέγω σοι πᾶν ὅσον κατειδόμην.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθον πατρὸς ἀρχαῖον τάφον,
ὁρῶ κολώνης ἐξ ἄκρας νεορρύτους
πηγὰς γάλακτος καὶ περιστεφῆ κύκλῳ
πάντων ὅσ' ἐστὶν ἀνθέων θήκην πατρός.
ἰδοῦσα δ' ἔσχον θαῦμα, καὶ περισκοπῶ
μή πού τις ἡμῖν ἐγγὺς ἐγχρίμπτῃ βροτῶν.
ὡς δ' ἐν γαλήνῃ πάντ' ἐδερκόμην τόπον,
τύμβου προσεῖρπον ἆσσον· ἐσχάτης δ' ὁρῶ 900
πυρᾶς νεώρη βόστρυχον τετμημένον·
κεὐθὺς τάλαιν' ὡς εἶδον, ἐμπαίει τί μοι
ψυχῇ σύνηθες ὄμμα, φιλτάτου βροτῶν
πάντων Ὀρέστου τοῦθ' ὁρᾶν τεκμήριον·
καὶ χερσὶ βαστάσασα δυσφημῶ μὲν οὔ,
χαρᾷ δὲ πίμπλημ' εὐθὺς ὄμμα δακρύων.
καὶ νῦν θ' ὁμοίως καὶ τότ' ἐξεπίσταμαι
μή του τόδ' ἀγλάϊσμα πλὴν κείνου μολεῖν·
τῷ γὰρ προσήκει πλήν γ' ἐμοῦ καὶ σοῦ τόδε;
κἀγὼ μὲν οὐκ ἔδρασα, τοῦτ' ἐπίσταμαι, 910
οὐδ' αὖ σύ· πῶς γάρ; ᾗ γε μηδὲ πρὸς θεοὺς
ἔξεστ' ἀκλαύστῳ τῆσδ' ἀποστῆναι στέγης.
ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ μητρὸς οὔθ' ὁ νοῦς φιλεῖ

ELECTRA

What proof, what evidence! What sight, poor girl,
Lit this illusion in thy fevered brain?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

O, as thou lov'st me, listen, then decide,
My story told, if I am mad or sane.

ELECTRA

Well, if it pleases thee to speak, speak on.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I will, and tell thee all that I have seen.
As I approached our sire's ancestral tomb,
I noted that the barrow still was wet
With streams of milk, and round the monument
Garlands were wreathed of every flower that blows,
I marvelled much and peered around in dread
Of someone watching me; but when I found
That nothing stirred, nearer the tomb I crept;
And there upon the grave's edge lay a lock
Of hair fresh-severed; at the sight there flashed
A dear familiar image on my soul,
Orestes; 'twas a token and a sign
From him whom most of all the world I love.
I took it in my hands and not a sound
I uttered but my eyes o'erbrimmed for joy.
I knew, I knew it then as now, for sure:
This shining treasure could be none but his.
Who else could set it there save thee or me?
And 'twas not I assuredly, nor thou;
How couldst thou, when thou mayst not leave the house
Not e'en to sacrifice? Our mother then?
When did our mother's heart that way incline?

τοιαῦτα πράσσειν οὔτε δρῶσ' ἐλάνθαν' ἄν·[1]
ἀλλ' ἔστ' Ὀρέστου ταῦτα τἀπιτύμβια.[2]
ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη, θάρσυνε· τοῖς αὐτοῖσί τοι
οὑχ αὑτὸς αἰεὶ δαιμόνων παραστατεῖ.
νῷν ἦν τὰ πρόσθεν στυγνός· ἡ δὲ νῦν ἴσως
πολλῶν ὑπάρξει κῦρος ἡμέρα καλῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φεῦ, τῆς ἀνοίας ὥς σ' ἐποικτίρω πάλαι. 920

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν; οὐ πρὸς ἡδονὴν λέγω τάδε;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅποι γῆς οὐδ' ὅποι γνώμης φέρει.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγὼ κάτοιδ' ἅ γ' εἶδον ἐμφανῶς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τέθνηκεν, ὦ τάλαινα, τἀκείνου δέ σοι
σωτήρι' ἔρρει· μηδὲν εἰς κεῖνόν γ' ὅρα.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἴμοι τάλαινα· τοῦ τάδ' ἤκουσας βροτῶν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοῦ πλησίον παρόντος, ἡνίκ' ὤλλυτο.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ ποῦ 'στιν οὗτος; θαῦμά τοί μ' ὑπέρχεται.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

κατ' οἶκον, ἡδὺς οὐδὲ μητρὶ δυσχερής.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

οἴμοι τάλαινα· τοῦ γὰρ ἀνθρώπων ποτ' ἦν 930
τὰ πολλὰ πατρὸς πρὸς τάφον κτερίσματα;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἶμαι μάλιστ' ἔγωγε τοῦ τεθνηκότος
μνημεῖ' Ὀρέστου ταῦτα προσθεῖναί τινα.

[1] ἐλάνθανεν MSS., Heath corr.
[2] τἀπιτίμια MSS., Dindorf corr.

Could she have 'scaped our notice, had she done it?
No, from Orestes comes this offering.
Courage, dear sister. Never destiny
Ran one unbroken course. On us till now
She frowned; to-day gives promise of her smiles.

ELECTRA

Alas! I pity thy simplicity,
Fond sister.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Are not then my tidings glad?

ELECTRA

Thou knowst not in what land of dreams thou art.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Wouldst have me doubt the evidence of my eyes?

ELECTRA

He is dead, I tell thee; look not to the dead
For a deliverer; *that* hope has gone.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Ah woe is me! Who told thee of his death?

ELECTRA

One who was present when he met his fate.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Where is the man? 'Tis strange, 'tis passing strange.

ELECTRA

Within; our mother's not unwelcome guest.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Ah me! Ah me! And whose then can have been
Those wreaths, that milk outpoured upon the grave?

ELECTRA

To me it seems most like that they were brought
A kindly offering to Orestes dead.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὦ δυστυχής· ἐγὼ δὲ σὺν χαρᾷ λόγους
τοιούσδ᾽ ἔχουσ᾽ ἔσπευδον, οὐκ εἰδυῖ᾽ ἄρα
ἵν᾽ ἦμεν ἄτης· ἀλλὰ νῦν, ὅθ᾽ ἱκόμην,
τά τ᾽ ὄντα πρόσθεν ἄλλα θ᾽ εὑρίσκω κακά.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὕτως ἔχει σοι ταῦτ᾽· ἐὰν δέ μοι πίθῃ,
τῆς νῦν παρούσης πημονῆς λύσεις βάρος.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἦ τοὺς θανόντας ἐξαναστήσω ποτέ; 940

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐκ ἔσθ᾽ ὅ γ᾽ εἶπον· οὐ γὰρ ὧδ᾽ ἄφρων ἔφυν.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

τί γὰρ κελεύεις ὧν ἐγὼ φερέγγυος;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τλῆναί σε δρῶσαν ἂν ἐγὼ παραινέσω.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ᾽ εἴ τις ὠφέλειά γ᾽, οὐκ ἀπώσομαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὅρα, πόνου τοι χωρὶς οὐδὲν εὐτυχεῖ.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ὁρῶ. ξυνοίσω πᾶν ὅσονπερ ἂν σθένω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄκουε δή νυν ᾗ βεβούλευμαι ποεῖν.
παρουσίαν μὲν οἶσθα καὶ σύ που φίλων
ὡς οὔτις ἡμῖν ἔστιν, ἀλλ᾽ Αιδης λαβὼν
ἀπεστέρηκε καὶ μόνα λελείμμεθον. 950
ἐγὼ δ᾽ ἕως μὲν τὸν κασίγνητον βίῳ
θάλλοντ᾽ ἔτ᾽ εἰσήκουον, εἶχον ἐλπίδας
φόνου ποτ᾽ αὐτὸν πράκτορ᾽ ἵξεσθαι πατρός·
νῦν δ᾽ ἡνίκ᾽ οὐκέτ᾽ ἔστιν, εἰς σὲ δὴ βλέπω,
ὅπως τὸν αὐτόχειρα πατρῴου φόνου

CHRYSOTHEMIS

And I, poor fool, was hurrying in hot haste
To bring my joyful message, unaware
Of our ill plight; and now that I have brought it
I find fresh sorrows added to the old.

ELECTRA

So stands the case; but be advised by me
And lighten this the burden of our woes.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Wouldst have me raise the dead to life again?

ELECTRA

I meant not that; I am not so demented.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

What wouldst thou then that lies within my powers?

ELECTRA

Be bold to execute what I enjoin.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

If it can profit, I will not refuse.

ELECTRA

Success, remember, is the meed of toil.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

I know it, and will help thee all I can.

ELECTRA

Then listen how I am resolved to act.
From friends, thou knowest now as well as I,
We cannot look for succour; death hath snatched
All from us and we two are left alone.
While yet my brother lived and tidings came
Of his prosperity, I still had hopes
That he would yet appear to avenge his sire:
But now that he is dead, to thee I turn;
From thee a sister craves a sister's aid,

ξὺν τῇδ' ἀδελφῇ μὴ κατοκνήσεις κτανεῖν
Αἴγισθον· οὐδὲν γάρ σε δεῖ κρύπτειν μ' ἔτι.
ποῖ γὰρ μενεῖς ῥᾴθυμος, εἰς τίν' ἐλπίδων
βλέψασ' ἔτ' ὀρθήν; ᾗ πάρεστι μὲν στένειν
πλούτου πατρῴου κτῆσιν ἐστερημένῃ, 960
πάρεστι δ' ἀλγεῖν ἐς τοσόνδε τοῦ χρόνου
ἄλεκτρα γηράσκουσαν ἀνυμέναιά τε.
καὶ τῶνδε μέντοι μηκέτ' ἐλπίσῃς ὅπως
τεύξει ποτ'· οὐ γὰρ ὧδ' ἄβουλός ἐστ' ἀνὴρ
Αἴγισθος ὥστε σόν ποτ' ἢ κἀμὸν γένος
βλαστεῖν ἐᾶσαι, πημονὴν αὑτῷ σαφῆ.
ἀλλ' ἢν ἐπίσπῃ τοῖς ἐμοῖς βουλεύμασιν,
πρῶτον μὲν εὐσέβειαν ἐκ πατρὸς κάτω
θανόντος οἴσει τοῦ κασιγνήτου θ' ἅμα·
ἔπειτα δ', ὥσπερ ἐξέφυς, ἐλευθέρα 970
καλεῖ τὸ λοιπὸν καὶ γάμων ἐπαξίων
τεύξει· φιλεῖ γὰρ πρὸς τὰ χρηστὰ πᾶς ὁρᾶν.
λόγων γε μὴν εὔκλειαν οὐχ ὁρᾷς ὅσην
σαυτῇ τε κἀμοὶ προσβαλεῖς πεισθεῖσ' ἐμοί;
τίς γάρ ποτ' ἀστῶν ἢ ξένων ἡμᾶς ἰδὼν
τοιοῖσδ' ἐπαίνοις οὐχὶ δεξιώσεται·
ἴδεσθε τώδε τὼ κασιγνήτω, φίλοι,
ὣ τὸν πατρῷον οἶκον ἐξεσωσάτην,
ὣ τοῖσιν ἐχθροῖς εὖ βεβηκόσιν ποτὲ
ψυχῆς ἀφειδήσαντε προὐστήτην φόνου· 980
τούτω φιλεῖν χρή, τώδε χρὴ πάντας σέβειν,
τώδ' ἔν θ' ἑορταῖς ἔν τε πανδήμῳ πόλει
τιμᾶν ἅπαντας οὕνεκ' ἀνδρείας χρεών.
τοιαῦτά τοι νὼ πᾶς τις ἐξερεῖ βροτῶν,
ζώσαιν θανούσαιν θ' ὥστε μὴ 'κλιπεῖν κλέος.
ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη, πείσθητι, συμπόνει πατρί,
σύγκαμν' ἀδελφῷ, παῦσον ἐκ κακῶν ἐμέ,

To slay—shrink not—our father's murderer,
Aegisthus. There, I plainly tell thee all.
Why hesitate? What faintest ray of hope
Is left to excuse thy lethargy, whose lot
Henceforth must be to mourn the ancestral wealth
Whereof thou art defrauded, to lament
A youth that withers fast, unloved, unwed.
For dream not wedded bliss can e'er be thine;
Too wary is Aegisthus to permit
That children should be born of thee or me
For his destruction. But, if thou attend
My counsel, thou shalt reap large benefits:
First, from our dead sire, and our brother too,
A name for piety; and furthermore,
A free-born woman thou shalt stand revealed;
And worthy spousals shall be thine, for worth
In women ever captivates all men.
Seest thou not too the honour thou shalt win
Both for thyself and me, if thou consent?
What countryman, what stranger will not greet
Our presence, when he sees us, with acclaim?
"Look, friends, upon this sister pair," he'll cry,
"Who raised their father's house, who dared confront
Their foes in power, who jeopardised their lives
In bloody vengeance. Honour to the pair,
Honour and worship! Yea at every feast
Let all the people laud their bravery."
So will our fame be bruited far and wide,
Nor shall our glory fail in life or death.
Sweet sister, hear me, take thy father's part,
Side with thy brother, give me, give thyself

παῦσον δὲ σαυτήν, τοῦτο γιγνώσκουσ' ὅτι
ζῆν αἰσχρὸν αἰσχρῶς τοῖς καλῶς πεφυκόσιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἐστὶν ἡ προμηθία 990
καὶ τῷ λέγοντι καὶ κλύοντι σύμμαχος.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

καὶ πρίν γε φωνεῖν, ὦ γυναῖκες, εἰ φρενῶν
ἐτύγχαν' αὕτη μὴ κακῶν, ἐσῴζετ' ἂν
τὴν εὐλάβειαν, ὥσπερ οὐχὶ σῴζεται.
ποῖ γάρ ποτ' ἐμβλέψασα τοιοῦτον θράσος
αὐτή θ' ὁπλίζει κἄμ' ὑπηρετεῖν καλεῖς;
οὐκ εἰσορᾷς; γυνὴ μὲν οὐδ' ἀνὴρ ἔφυς,
σθένεις δ' ἔλασσον τῶν ἐναντίων χερί.
δαίμων δὲ τοῖς μὲν εὐτυχεῖ καθ' ἡμέραν,
ἡμῖν δ' ἀπορρεῖ κἀπὶ μηδὲν ἔρχεται. 1000
τίς οὖν τοιοῦτον ἄνδρα βουλεύων ἑλεῖν
ἄλυπος ἄτης ἐξαπαλλαχθήσεται;
ὅρα κακῶς πράσσοντε μὴ μείζω κακὰ
κτησώμεθ', εἴ τις τούσδ' ἀκούσεται λόγους.
λύει γὰρ ἡμῖν οὐδὲν οὐδ' ἐπωφελεῖ
βάξιν καλὴν λαβόντε δυσκλεῶς θανεῖν.
οὐ γὰρ θανεῖν ἔχθιστον, ἀλλ' ὅταν θανεῖν
χρῄζων τις εἶτα μηδὲ τοῦτ' ἔχῃ λαβεῖν.
ἀλλ' ἀντιάζω, πρὶν πανωλέθρους τὸ πᾶν
ἡμᾶς τ' ὀλέσθαι κἀξερημῶσαι γένος, 1010
κατάσχες ὀργήν. καὶ τὰ μὲν λελεγμένα
ἄρρητ' ἐγώ σοι κἀτελῆ φυλάξομαι,
αὐτὴ δὲ νοῦν σχὲς ἀλλὰ τῷ χρόνῳ ποτέ,
σθένουσα μηδὲν τοῖς κρατοῦσιν εἰκαθεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πείθου· προνοίας οὐδὲν ἀνθρώποις ἔφυ
κέρδος λαβεῖν ἄμεινον οὐδὲ νοῦ σοφοῦ.

Surcease of sorrow; and remember this,
A life of shame is shame for noble souls.

CHORUS

Forethought for those that speak and those that hear,
In such grave issues, is most serviceable.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Before she spake, were not her mind perverse,
She had remembered caution, but she, friends,
Remembers not. (*To* ELECTRA.) What glamour fooled thee thus
To take up arms thus boldly and enlist me?
Thou art a woman, see'st thou not? no man,
No match in battle for thine adversaries;
Their fortune rises with the flowing tide,
Ours ebbs and leaves us soon a stranded hulk;
Who then could hope to grapple with a foe
So mighty and escape without a fall?
Bethink thee, if thy speech were overheard,
We are like to change our evil plight for worse.
Small comfort or commodity to win
Glory and die an ignominious death!
Mere death were easy, but to crave for death
And be denied that last boon—there's the sting.
Nay, I entreat, before we wreck ourselves
And perish root and branch, restrain thy rage.
All thou hast said for me shall be unsaid,
An empty breath. O learn at length, though late,
To yield, nor match thy weakness with their strength.

CHORUS

Hearken! for mortal man there is no gift
Greater than forethought and sobriety.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀπροσδόκητον οὐδὲν εἴρηκας· καλῶς δ'
ᾔδη σ' ἀπορρίψουσαν ἁπηγγελλόμην.
ἀλλ' αὐτόχειρί μοι μόνῃ τε δραστέον
τοὔργον τόδ'· οὐ γὰρ δὴ κενόν γ' ἀφήσομεν. 1020

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

φεῦ·
εἴθ' ὤφελες τοιάδε τὴν γνώμην πατρὸς
θνῄσκοντος εἶναι· πᾶν γὰρ ἂν κατειργάσω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἦ φύσιν γε, τὸν δὲ νοῦν ἥσσων τότε.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄσκει τοιαύτη νοῦν δι' αἰῶνος μένειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὡς οὐχὶ συνδράσουσα νουθετεῖς τάδε.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

εἰκὸς γὰρ ἐγχειροῦντα καὶ πράσσειν κακῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ζηλῶ σε τοῦ νοῦ, τῆς δὲ δειλίας στυγῶ.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀνέξομαι κλύουσα χὤταν εὖ λέγῃς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὔ ποτ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ γε μὴ πάθῃς τόδε.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

μακρὸς τὸ κρῖναι ταῦτα χὠ λοιπὸς χρόνος. 1030

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄπελθε· σοὶ γὰρ ὠφέλησις οὐκ ἔνι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἔνεστιν· ἀλλὰ σοὶ μάθησις οὐ πάρα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐλθοῦσα μητρὶ ταῦτα πάντ' ἔξειπε σῇ.

ELECTRA

'Tis as I thought: before thy answer came
I knew full well thou wouldst refuse thine aid.
Unaided then and by myself I'll do it,
For done it must be, though I work alone.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Ah well-a-way!
Would thou hadst been so minded on that day
Our father died! What couldst thou not have wrought!

ELECTRA

My temper was the same, my mind less ripe.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Study to keep the same mind all thy days.

ELECTRA

This counsel means refusal of thine aid.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Yes, for misfortune dogs such enterprise.

ELECTRA

I praise thy prudence, hate thy cowardice.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

E'en when thou shalt commend me, I will bear
Thy commendation no less patiently.

ELECTRA

That trial thou wilt ne'er endure from me.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Who lives will see; time yet may prove thee wrong

ELECTRA

Begone! in thee there is no power to aid.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Not so; in thee there is no will to learn.

ELECTRA

Go to thy mother; tell it all to her.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
οὐδ' αὖ τοσοῦτον ἔχθος ἐχθαίρω σ' ἐγώ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἀλλ' οὖν ἐπίστω γ' οἷ μ' ἀτιμίας ἄγεις.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀτιμίας μὲν οὔ, προμηθίας δὲ σοῦ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τῷ σῷ δικαίῳ δῆτ' ἐπισπέσθαι με δεῖ;
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ὅταν γὰρ εὖ φρονῇς, τόθ' ἡγήσει σὺ νῷν.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
ἦ δεινὸν εὖ λέγουσαν ἐξαμαρτάνειν.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
εἴρηκας ὀρθῶς ᾧ σὺ πρόσκεισαι κακῷ. 1040
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τί δ'; οὐ δοκῶ σοι ταῦτα σὺν δίκῃ λέγειν;
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ' ἔστιν ἔνθα χἠ δίκη βλάβην φέρει.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
τούτοις ἐγὼ ζῆν τοῖς νόμοις οὐ βούλομαι.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
ἀλλ' εἰ ποήσεις ταῦτ', ἐπαινέσεις ἐμέ.
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
καὶ μὴν ποήσω γ' οὐδὲν ἐκπλαγεῖσά σε.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
καὶ τοῦτ' ἀληθές, οὐδὲ βουλεύσει πάλιν;
ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ
βουλῆς γὰρ οὐδέν ἐστιν ἔχθιον κακῆς.
ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ
φρονεῖν ἔοικας οὐδὲν ὧν ἐγὼ λέγω.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

My hatred of thee does not reach so far.

ELECTRA

Thou wouldst dishonour me; that much is sure.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Dishonour? No, I seek to save thine honour.

ELECTRA

Am I to make thy rule of honour mine?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

When thou art wise, then thou shalt guide us both.

ELECTRA

Sound words; 'tis sad they are so misapplied.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Thou hittest well the blot that is thine own.

ELECTRA

How? dost deny the plea I urge is just?

CHRYSOTHEMIS

No; but e'en justice sometimes worketh harm.

ELECTRA

I choose not to conform to such a rule.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Well, if thy purpose hold, thou'lt own me right.

ELECTRA

It holds; I shall not swerve in awe of thee.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Is this thy last word? Wilt not be advised?

ELECTRA

No, naught is loathlier than ill advice.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Thou seemest deaf to all that I can urge.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάλαι δέδοκται ταῦτα κοὐ νεωστί μοι.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἄπειμι τοίνυν· οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τἄμ' ἔπη 1050
τολμᾷς ἐπαινεῖν οὔτ' ἐγὼ τοὺς σοὺς τρόπους.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' εἴσιθ'. οὔ σοι μὴ μεθέψομαί ποτε,
οὐδ' ἢν σφόδρ' ἱμείρουσα τυγχάνῃς· ἐπεὶ
πολλῆς ἀνοίας καὶ τὸ θηρᾶσθαι κενά.

ΧΡΥΣΟΘΕΜΙΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ σεαυτῇ τυγχάνεις δοκοῦσά τι
φρονεῖν, φρόνει τοιαῦθ'. ὅταν γὰρ ἐν κακοῖς
ἤδη βεβήκῃς, τἄμ' ἐπαινέσεις ἔπη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ στρ. α'

τί τοὺς ἄνωθεν φρονιμωτάτους οἰωνοὺς ἐσορώμενοι 1060
τροφᾶς
κηδομένους ἀφ' ὧν τε βλάστωσιν ἀφ' ὧν τ' ὄνασιν εὕρ-
ωσι, τάδ' οὐκ ἐπ' ἴσας τελοῦμεν;
ἀλλ' οὐ τὰν Διὸς ἀστραπὰν
καὶ τὰν οὐρανίαν Θέμιν,
δαρὸν οὐκ ἀπόνητοι.
ὦ χθονία βροτοῖσι φάμα, κατά μοι βόασον οἰκτρὰν
ὄπα τοῖς ἔνερθ' Ἀτρείδαις, ἀχόρευτα φέρουσ' ὀνείδη·

ἀντ. α'

ὅτι σφὶν ἤδη τὰ μὲν ἐκ δόμων νοσεῖ δή,[1] τὰ δὲ 1070
πρὸς τέκνων διπλῆ
φύλοπις οὐκέτ' ἐξισοῦται φιλοτασίῳ διαί-
τᾳ· πρόδοτος δὲ μόνα σαλεύει

[1] Triclinius adds δή.

ELECTRA

My resolution was not born to-day.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Then I will go, for thou canst not be brought
To approve my words, nor I to approve thy ways.

ELECTRA

Go in then; I shall never follow thee,
E'en shouldst thou pray me: 'tis insane to urge
An idle suit.

CHRYSOTHEMIS

Well, if thou art wise
In thine own eyes, so let it be; anon,
Sore stricken, thou wilt take my words to heart.

[*Exit* CHRYSOTHEMIS.

CHORUS

Wise nature taught the birds of air (*Str.* 1)
For those who reared them in the nest to care;
The parent bird is nourished by his brood,
And shall not we, as they,
The debt of nature pay,
Shall man not show like gratitude?
By Zeus who hurls the leven,
By Themis throned in heaven,
There comes a judgment day;
Not long shall punishment delay.
O voice that echoes to the world below,
Bear to the dead a wail of woe,
A coronach, a tale of shame
To Atreus' line proclaim.

Tell him his house is stricken sore, (*Ant.* 1)
Tell him his children now no more
In amity together dwell;
Dire strife the twain divides,

Ἠλέκτρα, τὸν ἀεὶ[1] πατρὸς
δειλαία στενάχουσ', ὅπως
ἁ πάνδυρτος ἀηδών,
οὔτε τι τοῦ θανεῖν προμηθὴς τό τε μὴ βλέπειν
ἑτοίμα,
διδύμαν ἑλοῦσ' Ἐρινύν· τίς ἂν εὔπατρις ὧδε 1080
βλάστοι;

οὐδεὶς τῶν ἀγαθῶν γὰρ[2] στρ. β'
ζῶν κακῶς εὔκλειαν αἰσχῦναι θέλει
νώνυμος, ὦ παῖ παῖ·
ὡς καὶ σὺ πάγκλαυτον αἰῶνα κοινὸν εἵλου,
τὸ μὴ καλὸν καθοπλίσασα, δύο φέρειν ἐν ἑνὶ
λόγῳ,
σοφά τ' ἀρίστα τε παῖς κεκλῆσθαι.
ζῴης μοι καθύπερθεν ἀντ. β'. 1090
χειρὶ καὶ πλούτῳ τεῶν ἐχθρῶν ὅσον
νῦν ὑπόχειρ[3] ναίεις·
ἐπεί σ' ἐφηύρηκα μοίρᾳ μὲν οὐκ ἐν ἐσθλᾷ
βεβῶσαν, ἃ δὲ μέγιστ' ἔβλαστε νόμιμα, τῶνδε
φερομέναν
ἄριστα τᾷ Ζηνὸς[4] εὐσεβείᾳ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἆρ', ὦ γυναῖκες, ὀρθά τ' εἰσηκούσαμεν
ὀρθῶς θ' ὁδοιποροῦμεν ἔνθα χρῄζομεν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἐξερευνᾷς καὶ τί βουληθεὶς πάρει; 1100

[1] The text is corrupt, and no plausible emendation has yet been suggested.
[2] Hermann adds γὰρ *metri gratia*.
[3] ὑπὸ χεῖρα MSS., Musgrave corr.
[4] Διὸς MSS., Triclinius corr.

Alone Electra bides,
    Alone she braves the surging swell.

Disconsolate doth she her sire bewail,
Like the forlornest nightingale;
Reckless of life, could she but quell
The cursed pair, those Furies fell.
Where shall ye find on earth
A maid to match her worth?

No generous soul were fain (*Str.* 2)
By a base life his fair repute to stain.
Such baseness thou didst scorn,
Choosing, my child, to mourn with them that mourn.
Wise and of daughters best—
With double honours thou art doubly blest.

O may I see thee tower (*Ant.* 2)
As high above thy foes in wealth and power
As now they tower o'er thee;
For now thy state is piteous to see.
Yet brightly dost thou shine,
For fear of Zeus far-famed and love of laws divine.

Enter ORESTES.

ORESTES

Pray tell me, ladies, were we guided right,
And are we close upon our journey's end?

CHORUS

What seek'st thou, stranger, and with what intent?

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

Αἴγισθον ἔνθ' ᾤκηκεν ἱστορῶ πάλαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εὖ θ' ἱκάνεις χὠ φράσας ἀζήμιος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίς οὖν ἂν ὑμῶν τοῖς ἔσω φράσειεν ἂν
ἡμῶν ποθεινὴν κοινόπουν παρουσίαν;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἥδ', εἰ τὸν ἄγχιστόν γε κηρύσσειν χρεών.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἴθ', ὦ γύναι, δήλωσον εἰσελθοῦσ' ὅτι
Φωκῆς ματεύουσ' ἄνδρες Αἴγισθόν τινες.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαιν', οὐ δή ποθ' ἧς ἠκούσαμεν
φήμης φέροντες ἐμφανῆ τεκμήρια;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ οἶδα τὴν σὴν κληδόν'· ἀλλά μοι γέρων 1110
ἐφεῖτ' Ὀρέστου Στρόφιος ἀγγεῖλαι πέρι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' ἔστιν, ὦ ξέν'; ὥς μ' ὑπέρχεται φόβος.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φέροντες αὐτοῦ σμικρὰ λείψαν' ἐν βραχεῖ
τεύχει θανόντος, ὡς ὁρᾷς, κομίζομεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οἲ 'γὼ τάλαινα, τοῦτ' ἐκεῖν' ἤδη σαφὲς
πρόχειρον ἄχθος, ὡς ἔοικε, δέρκομαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἴπερ τι κλαίεις τῶν Ὀρεστείων κακῶν,
τόδ' ἄγγος ἴσθι σῶμα τοὐκείνου στέγον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ ξεῖνε, δός νυν, πρὸς θεῶν, εἴπερ τόδε
κέκευθεν αὐτὸν τεῦχος, εἰς χεῖρας λαβεῖν, 1120

ORESTES

I seek and long have sought Aegisthus' home.

CHORUS

'Tis here ; thy guide is nowise blameable.

ORESTES

Would one of you announce to those within
The auspicious advent of our company ?

CHORUS

This maiden, as the next of kin, will do it.

ORESTES

Go, madam, say that visitors have come
And seek Aegisthus—certain Phocians.

ELECTRA

Ah woe is me ! You come not to confirm
By ocular proof the rumours that we heard ?

ORESTES

I've heard no "rumours." Agèd Strophius
Charged me with tidings of Orestes.

ELECTRA

Ha !
What tidings, stranger ? how I quake with dread !

ORESTES

Ashes within this narrow urn we bear,
All that remains of him, as thou mayst see.

ELECTRA

Ah me unhappy ! in my very sight
Lies palpable the burden of my woes.

ORESTES

If for Orestes thou art weeping, know
This brazen urn contains the dust of him.

ELECTRA

O if it hold his ashes, let me, friend,
O let me, let me take it in my hands.

ὅπως ἐμαυτὴν καὶ γένος τὸ πᾶν ὁμοῦ
ξὺν τῇδε κλαύσω κἀποδύρωμαι σποδῷ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

δόθ', ἥτις ἐστί, προσφέροντες· οὐ γὰρ ὡς
ἐν δυσμενείᾳ γ' οὖσ' ἐπαιτεῖται τάδε,
ἀλλ' ἢ φίλων τις ἢ πρὸς αἵματος φύσιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φιλτάτου μνημεῖον ἀνθρώπων ἐμοὶ
ψυχῆς Ὀρέστου λοιπόν, ὥς σ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδων
οὐχ ὧνπερ ἐξέπεμπον εἰσεδεξάμην.
νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲν ὄντα βαστάζω χεροῖν,
δόμων δέ σ', ὦ παῖ, λαμπρὸν ἐξέπεμψ' ἐγώ. 1130
ὡς ὤφελον πάροιθεν ἐκλιπεῖν βίον,
πρὶν ἐς ξένην σε γαῖαν ἐκπέμψαι χεροῖν
κλέψασα ταῖνδε κἀνασώσασθαι φόνου,
ὅπως θανὼν ἔκεισο τῇ τόθ' ἡμέρᾳ,
τύμβου πατρῴου κοινὸν εἰληχὼς μέρος.
νῦν δ' ἐκτὸς οἴκων κἀπὶ γῆς ἄλλης φυγὰς
κακῶς ἀπώλου, σῆς κασιγνήτης δίχα,
κοὔτ' ἐν φίλαισι χερσὶν ἡ τάλαιν' ἐγὼ
λουτροῖς σ' ἐκόσμησ' οὔτε παμφλέκτου πυρὸς
ἀνειλόμην, ὡς εἰκός, ἄθλιον βάρος, 1140
ἀλλ' ἐν ξέναισι χερσὶ κηδευθεὶς τάλας
σμικρὸς προσήκεις ὄγκος ἐν σμικρῷ κύτει.
οἴμοι τάλαινα τῆς ἐμῆς πάλαι τροφῆς
ἀνωφελήτου, τὴν ἐγὼ θάμ' ἀμφὶ σοὶ
πόνῳ γλυκεῖ παρέσχον· οὔτε γάρ ποτε
μητρὸς σύ γ' ἦσθα μᾶλλον ἢ κἀμοῦ φίλος,
οὔθ' οἱ κατ' οἶκον ἦσαν, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τροφός,
ἐγὼ δ' ἀδελφὴ σοὶ προσηυδώμην ἀεί.
νῦν δ' ἐκλέλοιπε ταῦτ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ

Not for this dust alone, but for myself
And all my house withal, I'll weep and wail.

ORESTES

Bring it and give it her, whoe'er she be;
For not as an ill-wisher, but as friend,
Or haply near of kin, she asks the boon.

ELECTRA

Last relics of the man I most did love,
Orestes! high in hope I sent thee forth;
How hast thou dashed all hope in thy return!
Radiant as day thou speddest forth, and now
I hold a dusty nothing in my hands.
Would I had died before I rescued thee
From death and sent thee to a foreign land!
Then hadst thou fallen together with thy sire
And lain beside him in the ancestral tomb:
Now in a strange land, exiled, far from home,
Far from thy sister thou hast died, ah me!
How miserably! I was not by to lave
And deck with loving hands thy corse, and snatch
Thy charrèd bones from out the flaming pyre.
Alas! by foreign hands these rites were paid,
And now thou comest back to me, of dust
A little burden in this little urn.
O for the nursing and the toil, no toil,
I spent on thee an infant, all in vain!
For thou wast ne'er thy mother's babe, but mine;
Thou hadst no nurse in all the house but me,
I was *thy sister*, none so called but me.
But now all this hath vanished in a day,

θανόντι σὺν σοί· πάντα γὰρ συναρπάσας 1150
θύελλ᾽ ὅπως βέβηκας. οἴχεται πατήρ·
τέθνηκ᾽ ἐγὼ σοί· φροῦδος αὐτὸς εἶ θανών·
γελῶσι δ᾽ ἐχθροί· μαίνεται δ᾽ ὑφ᾽ ἡδονῆς
μήτηρ ἀμήτωρ, ἧς ἐμοὶ σὺ πολλάκις
φήμας λάθρᾳ προὔπεμπες ὡς φανούμενος
τιμωρὸς αὐτός. ἀλλὰ ταῦθ᾽ ὁ δυστυχὴς
δαίμων ὁ σός τε κἀμὸς ἐξαφείλετο,
ὅς σ᾽ ὧδέ μοι προὔπεμψεν ἀντὶ φιλτάτης
μορφῆς σποδόν τε καὶ σκιὰν ἀνωφελῆ.
οἴμοι μοι. 1160
ὦ δέμας οἰκτρόν. φεῦ φεῦ.
ὦ δεινοτάτας, οἴμοι μοι,
πεμφθεὶς κελεύθους, φίλταθ᾽, ὥς μ᾽ ἀπώλεσας·
ἀπώλεσας δῆτ᾽, ὦ κασίγνητον κάρα.
τοιγὰρ σὺ δέξαι μ᾽ ἐς τὸ σὸν τόδε στέγος,
τὴν μηδὲν εἰς τὸ μηδέν, ὡς σὺν σοὶ κάτω
ναίω τὸ λοιπόν· καὶ γὰρ ἡνίκ᾽ ἦσθ᾽ ἄνω,
ξὺν σοὶ μετεῖχον τῶν ἴσων, καὶ νῦν ποθῶ
τοῦ σοῦ θανοῦσα μὴ ἀπολείπεσθαι τάφου.
τοὺς γὰρ θανόντας οὐχ ὁρῶ λυπουμένους. 1170

ΧΟΡΟΣ

θνητοῦ πέφυκας πατρός, Ἠλέκτρα, φρόνει,
θνητὸς δ᾽ Ὀρέστης. ὥστε μὴ λίαν στένε.
πᾶσιν γὰρ ἡμῖν τοῦτ᾽ ὀφείλεται παθεῖν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ φεῦ. τί λέξω; ποῖ λόγων ἀμηχανῶν
ἔλθω; κρατεῖν γὰρ οὐκέτι γλώσσης σθένω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ᾽ ἔσχες ἄλγος; πρὸς τί τοῦτ᾽ εἰπὼν κυρεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἦ σὸν τὸ κλεινὸν εἶδος Ἠλέκτρας τόδε;

Dead with thy death, a whirlwind that passed by,
And left all desolate; thy father's gone,
And I am dead in thee, and thou art lost;
And our foes laugh. That mother, mother none,
Whose crimes, as oft thou gav'st me secret word,
Thou wouldst thyself full speedily avenge,
Is mad for joy. But now malignant fate,
Thy fate and mine, hath blasted all and sent me,
Instead of that dear form I loved so well,
Cold ashes and an unavailing shade.
Ah me! Ah me!
O piteous corse!
Ah woe is me!
O woeful coming! I am all undone,
Undone by thee, beloved brother mine!
Take me, O take me to thy last lone home,
A shadow to a shade, that I may dwell
With thee for ever in the underworld;
For here on earth we shared alike, and now
I fain would die to share with thee thy tomb;
For with the dead there is no mourning, none.

CHORUS

Child of a mortal sire, Electra, think,
Orestes too was mortal; calm thy grief.
Death is a debt that all of us must pay.

ORESTES

Ah me! what shall I say where all words fail?
And yet I can no longer curb my tongue.

ELECTRA

What sudden trouble made thee speak like this?

ORESTES

Is this the famed Electra I behold?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τόδ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖνο, καὶ μάλ' ἀθλίως ἔχον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οἴμοι ταλαίνης ἆρα τῆσδε συμφορᾶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δή ποτ', ὦ ξέν', ἀμφ' ἐμοὶ στένεις τάδε; 1180

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ σῶμ' ἀτίμως κἀθέως ἐφθαρμένον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὔτοι ποτ' ἄλλην ἢ 'μὲ δυσφημεῖς, ξένε.

ΟΤΕΣΤΗΣ

φεῦ τῆς ἀνύμφου δυσμόρου τε σῆς τροφῆς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δή ποτ', ὦ ξέν', ὧδ' ἐπισκοπῶν στένεις;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὡς οὐκ ἄρ' ᾔδη τῶν ἐμῶν οὐδὲν κακῶν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐν τῷ διέγνως τοῦτο τῶν εἰρημένων;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὁρῶν σε πολλοῖς ἐμπρέπουσαν ἄλγεσιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ μὴν ὁρᾷς γε παῦρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ πῶς γένοιτ' ἂν τῶνδ' ἔτ' ἐχθίω βλέπειν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁθούνεκ' εἰμὶ τοῖς φονεῦσι σύντροφος 1190

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τοῖς τοῦ; πόθεν τοῦτ' ἐξεσήμηνας κακόν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τοῖς πατρός· εἶτα τοῖσδε δουλεύω βίᾳ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίς γάρ σ' ἀνάγκῃ τῇδε προτρέπει βροτῶν;

ELECTRA

'Tis she, and very wretched is her state.

ORESTES

O for the heavy change! Alas, alas!

ELECTRA

Surely thy pity, sir, is not for *me*.

ORESTES

O beauty marred by foul and impious spite!

ELECTRA

Yea, sir, this wreck of womanhood am I.

ORESTES

Alas, how sad a life of singleness!

ELECTRA

Why gaze thus on me, stranger, and lament?

ORESTES

Of my own ills how little then I knew!

ELECTRA

Was this revealed by any word of mine?

ORESTES

By seeing thee conspicuous in thy woes.

ELECTRA

And yet my looks reveal but half my woes.

ORESTES

Could there be woes more piteous to behold?

ELECTRA

Yea, to be housemate with the murderers—

ORESTES

Whose murderers? at what villainy dost hint?

ELECTRA

My father's; and their slave am I perforce.

ORESTES

Who is it puts upon thee this constraint?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μήτηρ καλεῖται, μητρὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἐξισοῖ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί δρῶσα; πότερα χερσὶν ἢ λύμῃ βίου;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ χερσὶ καὶ λύμαισι καὶ πᾶσιν κακοῖς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐδ' οὑπαρήξων οὐδ' ὁ κωλύσων πάρα;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δῆθ'. ὃς ἦν γάρ μοι σὺ προὔθηκας σποδόν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὦ δύσποτμ', ὡς ὁρῶν σ' ἐποικτίρω πάλαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μόνος βροτῶν νυν ἴσθ' ἐποικτίρας ποτέ. 1200

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μόνος γὰρ ἥκω τοῖς ἴσοις ἀλγῶν κακοῖς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐ δή ποθ' ἡμῖν ξυγγενὴς ἥκεις ποθέν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ φράσαιμ' ἄν, εἰ τὸ τῶνδ' εὔνουν πάρα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ἐστὶν εὔνουν, ὥστε πρὸς πιστὰς ἐρεῖς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μέθες τόδ' ἄγγος νῦν, ὅπως τὸ πᾶν μάθῃς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ δῆτα πρὸς θεῶν τοῦτό μ' ἐργάσῃ, ξένε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πείθου λέγοντι κοὐχ ἁμαρτήσει ποτέ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μή, πρὸς γενείου, μὴ 'ξέλῃ τὰ φίλτατα.

ELECTRA

My mother, not a mother save in name.

ORESTES

By blows or petty tyrannies or how?

ELECTRA

By blows and tyrannies of every kind.

ORESTES

And is there none to help or stay her hand?

ELECTRA

None; there *was* one, the man whose dust I hold.

ORESTES

Poor maid! my pity's stirred at sight of thee.

ELECTRA

Thou art the first who ever pitied me.

ORESTES

I am the first to feel a common woe.

ELECTRA

What, canst thou be some kinsman from afar?

ORESTES

If these are friends who hear us, I would answer.

ELECTRA

Yes, they are friends; thou needst not fear to speak

ORESTES

Give back this urn, and then I'll tell thee all.

ELECTRA

Ask not so hard a thing, good sir, I pray.

ORESTES

Do as I bid thee; thou shalt not repent it.

ELECTRA

O, I adjure thee, rob me not of that
The most I prize on earth.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὔ φημ' ἐάσειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ τάλαιν' ἐγὼ σέθεν,

Ὀρέστα, τῆς σῆς εἰ στερήσομαι ταφῆς. 1210

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εὔφημα φώνει· πρὸς δίκης γὰρ οὐ στένεις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς τὸν θανόντ' ἀδελφὸν οὐ δίκῃ στένω;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὔ σοι προσήκει τήνδε προσφωνεῖν φάτιν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὕτως ἄτιμός εἰμι τοῦ τεθνηκότος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἄτιμος οὐδενὸς σύ· τοῦτο δ' οὐχὶ σόν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἴπερ γ' Ὀρέστου σῶμα βαστάζω τόδε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐκ Ὀρέστου, πλὴν λόγῳ γ' ἠσκημένον.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποῦ δ' ἔστ' ἐκείνου τοῦ ταλαιπώρου τάφος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστι· τοῦ γὰρ ζῶντος οὐκ ἔστιν τάφος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας, ὦ παῖ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ψεῦδος οὐδὲν ὧν λέγω. 1220

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ ζῇ γὰρ ἀνήρ;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

εἴπερ ἔμψυχός γ' ἐγώ.

ORESTES

It may not be.

ELECTRA

Ah! woe for thee, Orestes, woe is me,
If I am not to give thee burial.

ORESTES

Guard well thy lips; thou hast no right to mourn.

ELECTRA

No right to mourn a brother who is dead!

ORESTES

To speak of him in this wise is not meet.

ELECTRA

What, am I so dishonoured of the dead?

ORESTES

Of none dishonoured: this is not thy part.

ELECTRA

Not if Orestes' ashes here I hold?

ORESTES

They are not his, though feigned to pass for his.

ELECTRA

Where then is my unhappy brother's grave?

ORESTES

There is no grave; we bury not the quick.

ELECTRA

What sayst thou, boy?

ORESTES

Nothing that is not true.

ELECTRA

He lives?

ORESTES

As surely as I am alive.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ γὰρ σὺ κεῖνος;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τήνδε προσβλέψασά μου
σφραγῖδα πατρὸς ἔκμαθ' εἰ σαφῆ λέγω.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατον φῶς.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

φίλτατον, συμμαρτυρῶ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φθέγμ', ἀφίκου;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μηκέτ' ἄλλοθεν πύθῃ,

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔχω σε χερσίν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὡς τὰ λοίπ' ἔχοις ἀεί.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ὦ πολίτιδες,
ὁρᾶτ' Ὀρέστην τόνδε, μηχαναῖσι μὲν
θανόντα, νῦν δὲ μηχαναῖς σεσωσμένον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὁρῶμεν, ὦ παῖ, κἀπὶ συμφοραῖσί μοι   1230
γεγηθὸς ἕρπει δάκρυον ὀμμάτων ἄπο.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰὼ γοναί,   στρ.
γοναὶ σωμάτων ἐμοὶ φιλτάτων,
ἐμόλετ' ἀρτίως,
ἐφηύρετ', ἤλθετ', εἴδεθ' οὓς ἐχρῄζετε.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πάρεσμεν· ἀλλὰ σῖγ' ἔχουσα πρόσμενε.

ELECTRA

What, art thou he?

ORESTES

Look at this signet ring,
My father's; let it witness if I lie.

ELECTRA

O happy day!

ORESTES

O, happy, happy day!

ELECTRA

Thy voice I greet!

ORESTES

My voice gives greeting back.

ELECTRA

My arms embrace thee!

ORESTES

May they clasp me aye!

ELECTRA

My countrywomen, dearest friends, behold
Orestes who in feigning died, and so
By feigning is alive again and safe.

CHORUS

We see him, daughter, and this glad surprise
Makes our eyes overflow with happy tears.

ELECTRA

Son of my best loved sire, (*Str.*)
Now hast thou come, art here to find, to see
Thy heart's desire.

ORESTES

E'en so; but best keep silence for a while.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δ' ἔστιν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σιγᾶν ἄμεινον, μή τις ἔνδοθεν κλύῃ.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' οὐ μὰ τὴν ἄδμητον αἰὲν Ἄρτεμιν,[1]
τόδε μὲν οὔ ποτ' ἀξιώσω τρέσαι, 1240
περισσὸν ἄχθος ἔνδον
γυναικῶν ὂν αἰεί.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὅρα γε μὲν δὴ κἀν γυναιξὶν ὡς Ἄρης
ἔνεστιν· εὖ δ' ἔξοισθα πειραθεῖσά που.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὀτοτοτοτοῖ τοτοῖ,
ἀνέφελον ἐνέβαλες οὔ ποτε καταλύσιμον,
οὐδέ ποτε λησόμενον ἁμέτερον
οἷον ἔφυ κακόν. 1250

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἔξοιδα, παῖ, ταῦτ'· ἀλλ' ὅταν παρουσία
φράζῃ, τότ' ἔργων τῶνδε μεμνῆσθαι χρεών.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὁ πᾶς ἐμοί, ἀντ.
ὁ πᾶς ἂν πρέποι παρὼν ἐννέπειν
τάδε δίκᾳ χρόνος·
μόλις γὰρ ἔσχον νῦν ἐλεύθερον στόμα.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ξύμφημι κἀγώ· τοιγαροῦν σῴζου τόδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τί δρῶσα;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὗ μή 'στι καιρὸς μὴ μακρὰν βούλου λέγειν.

[1] ἀλλ' οὐ τὰν Ἄρτεμιν τὰν αἰὲν ἀδμήταν MSS., Fröhlich corr.

ELECTRA

What need for silence?

ORESTES

'Twere wise, lest someone from the house should hear.

ELECTRA

Nay, by Queen Artemis the virgin maid,
Of women-folk I ne'er will be afraid,
Those stay-at-homes, mere cumberers of the ground.

ORESTES

Yet note that in the breasts of women dwells
The War-God too, as thou methinks hast found.

ELECTRA

Ah me, ah me!
Thou wak'st a memory
Inveterate, ineffaceable,
An ache time cannot quell.

ORESTES

I know it too; but when the hour shall strike
Then it behoves us to recall those deeds.

ELECTRA

All time, each passing hour (*Ant.*)
Henceforward I were fain
To tell my griefs, my pain,
For late and hardly have I won free speech.

ORESTES

'Tis so; then forfeit not this liberty.

ELECTRA

How forfeit it?

ORESTES

By speaking out of season overmuch.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὖν ἂν ἀξίαν γε σοῦ πεφηνότος — 1260
μεταβάλοιτ' ἂν ὧδε σιγὰν λόγων;
ἐπεί σε νῦν ἀφράστως
ἀέλπτως τ' ἐσεῖδον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τότ' εἶδες, εὖτε[1] θεοί μ' ἐπώτρυναν μολεῖν
⏑ ⏑́ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑́ ⏑ – ⏑ ⏑́ ⏑ –.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔφρασας ὑπερτέραν
τᾶς πάρος ἔτι χάριτος, εἴ σε θεὸς ἐπόρισεν
ἁμέτερα πρὸς μέλαθρα· δαιμόνιον
αὐτὸ τίθημ' ἐγώ. — 1270

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ μέν σ' ὀκνῶ χαίρουσαν εἰργαθεῖν, τὰ δὲ
δέδοικα λίαν ἡδονῇ νικωμένην.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰὼ χρόνῳ μακρῷ φιλτάταν ὁδὸν.
ἐπαξιώσας ὧδέ μοι φανῆναι,
μή τί με, πολύπονον ὧδ' ἰδὼν

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί μὴ ποήσω;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μή μ' ἀποστερήσῃς
τῶν σῶν προσώπων ἁδονὰν μεθέσθαι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἦ κάρτα κἂν ἄλλοισι θυμοίμην ἰδών.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ξυναινεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τί μὴν οὔ; — 1280

[1] MSS. ὅτε, Jebb. corr. MSS. ὤτρυναν, Reiske corr.

ELECTRA

But who would barter speech for silence now,
Who could be dumb,
Now that beyond all thought and hope
I've seen thee come?

ORESTES

That sight was then vouchsafed thee when the gods
First monished me to turn my steps towards home.

ELECTRA

If a god guided thee
To seek our halls, this boon
Surpasses all before, I see
The hand of heaven.

ORESTES

To check thy gladness I am loth, and yet
This ecstasy of joy—it makes me fear.

ELECTRA

O after many a weary year
Restored to glad my eyes,
Seeing my utter misery, forbear—

ORESTES

What is thy prayer?

ELECTRA

Forbear to rob me of the light,
The presence of thy face.

ORESTES

If any dared essay it, I were wrath.

ELECTRA

Dost thou consent?

ORESTES

How could I otherwise?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλαι, ἔκλυον ἂν ἐγὼ οὐδ' ἂν ἤλπισ' αὐδάν,
οὐδ' ἂν ἔσχον ὁρμὰν [1]
ἄναυδον οὐδὲ σὺν βοᾷ κλύουσα,
τάλαινα. νῦν δ' ἔχω σε· προυφάνης δὲ
φιλτάταν ἔχων πρόσοψιν,
ἇς ἐγὼ οὐδ' ἂν ἐν κακοῖς λαθοίμαν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ μὲν περισσεύοντα τῶν λόγων ἄφες,
καὶ μήτε μήτηρ ὡς κακὴ δίδασκέ με,
μήθ' ὡς πατρῴαν κτῆσιν Αἴγισθος δόμων 1290
ἀντλεῖ, τὰ δ' ἐκχεῖ, τὰ δὲ διασπείρει μάτην·
χρόνου γὰρ ἄν σοι καιρὸν ἐξείργοι λόγος.
ἃ δ' ἁρμόσει μοι τῷ παρόντι νῦν χρόνῳ
σήμαιν,' ὅπου φανέντες ἢ κεκρυμμένοι
γελῶντας ἐχθροὺς παύσομεν τῇ νῦν ὁδῷ.
οὕτω δ' ὅπως μήτηρ σε μὴ 'πιγνώσεται
φαιδρῷ προσώπῳ νῷν ἐπελθόντοιν δόμους·
ἀλλ' ὡς ἐπ' ἄτῃ τῇ μάτην λελεγμένῃ
στέναζ'· ὅταν γὰρ εὐτυχήσωμεν, τότε
χαίρειν παρέσται καὶ γελᾶν ἐλευθέρως. 1300

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ' ὦ κασίγνηθ', ὧδ' ὅπως καὶ σοὶ φίλον
καὶ τοὐμὸν ἔσται τῇδ'· ἐπεὶ τὰς ἡδονὰς
πρὸς σοῦ λαβοῦσα κοὐκ ἐμὰς ἐκτησάμην,
κοὐδ' ἄν σε λυπήσασα δεξαίμην βραχὺ
αὐτὴ μέγ' εὑρεῖν κέρδος· οὐ γὰρ ἂν καλῶς
ὑπηρετοίην τῷ παρόντι δαίμονι.
ἀλλ' οἶσθα μὲν τἀνθένδε, πῶς γὰρ οὔ; κλύων
ὁθούνεκ' Αἴγισθος μὲν οὐ κατὰ στέγας,
μήτηρ δ' ἐν οἴκοις· ἣν σὺ μὴ δείσῃς ποθ' ὡς

[1] Arndt adds οὐδ' ἂν. Blomfield reads ὁρμὰν for ὀργὰν of MSS.

ELECTRA (*to* CHORUS)

Friends, a voice is in my ear,
That I never hoped to hear.
At the glad sound how could I
Be mute nor raise a joyous cry?
But I have thee, and the light
Of thy countenance so bright
Not e'en sorrow can eclipse,
Or still the music of those lips.

ORESTES

Spare me all superfluity of words—
How vile our mother, how Aegisthus drains
By waste and luxury our father's house;
The time admits not such prolixity.
But tell me rather what will best subserve
Our present need—where we must show ourselves,
Or lie in wait, and either way confound
The mockery and triumph of our foes.
And see that when we twain are gone within
Our mother read not in thy radiant looks
Our secret; weep as overwhelmed with grief
At our feigned story; when the victory's won
We shall have time and liberty to laugh.

ELECTRA

Yea, as it pleaseth thee it pleases me,
Brother, for all my pleasure is thy gift,
Not mine; nor would I purchase for myself
The greatest boon that cost thee the least pang:
So should I cross the providence that guides us.
How it stands with us, doubtless thou hast heard.
Aegisthus, as thou knowest, is away;
Only our mother keeps the house, and fear not

γέλωτι τοὐμὸν φαιδρὸν ὄψεται κάρα. 1310
μῖσός τε γὰρ παλαιὸν ἐντέτηκέ μοι,
κἀπεί σ' ἐσεῖδον, οὔ ποτ' ἐκλήξω χαρᾷ
δακρυρροοῦσα· πῶς γὰρ ἂν λήξαιμ' ἐγώ,
ἥτις μιᾷ σε τῇδ' ὁδῷ θανόντα τε
καὶ ζῶντ' ἐσεῖδον; εἴργασαι δέ μ' ἄσκοπα·
ὥστ' εἰ πατήρ μοι ζῶν ἵκοιτο, μηκέτ' ἂν
τέρας νομίζειν αὐτό, πιστεύειν δ' ὁρᾶν.
ὅτ' οὖν τοιαύτην ἡμὶν ἐξήκεις ὁδόν,
ἄρχ' αὐτὸς ὥς σοι θυμός· ὡς ἐγὼ μόνη
οὐκ ἂν δυοῖν ἥμαρτον· ἢ γὰρ ἂν καλῶς 1320
ἔσωσ' ἐμαυτὴν ἢ καλῶς ἀπωλόμην.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σιγᾶν ἐπῄνεσ' ὡς ἐπ' ἐξόδῳ κλύω
τῶν ἔνδοθεν χωροῦντος.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἴσιτ', ὦ ξένοι,
ἄλλως τε καὶ φέροντες οἷ' ἂν οὔτε τις
δόμων ἀπώσαιτ' οὔτ' ἂν ἡσθείη λαβών.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ὦ πλεῖστα μῶροι καὶ φρενῶν τητώμενοι,
πότερα παρ' οὐδὲν τοῦ βίου κήδεσθ' ἔτι
ἢ νοῦς ἔνεστιν οὔτις ὑμὶν ἐγγενής,
ὅτ' οὐ παρ' αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ' ἐν αὐτοῖσιν κακοῖς
τοῖσιν μεγίστοις ὄντες οὐ γιγνώσκετε; 1330
ἀλλ' εἰ σταθμοῖσι τοῖσδε μὴ 'κύρουν ἐγὼ
πάλαι φυλάσσων, ἦν ἂν ὑμὶν ἐν δόμοις
τὰ δρώμεν' ὑμῶν πρόσθεν ἢ τὰ σώματα·
νῦν δ' εὐλάβειαν τῶνδε προὐθέμην ἐγώ.
καὶ νῦν ἀπαλλαχθέντε τῶν μακρῶν λόγων
καὶ τῆς ἀπλήστου τῆσδε σὺν χαρᾷ βοῆς

That she will see my face lit up with smiles;
My hatred of her is too deep engrained.
Moreover, since thy coming I have wept,
Wept for pure joy and still must weep to see
The dead alive, on one day dead and living.
It works me strangely; if my sire appeared
In bodily presence, I should now believe it
No mocking phantom but his living self.
Thus far no common fate hath guided thee;
So lead me as thou wilt, for left alone
I had myself achieved of two things one,
A noble living or a noble death.

ORESTES

Hush, hush! I hear a stir within the house
As if one issued forth.

ELECTRA (*to* ORESTES *and* PYLADES)

Pass in, good sirs,
Ye are sure of welcome; they within will not
Reject your gift, though bitter it may prove.
Enter AGED SERVANT.

AGED SERVANT

Fools! madmen! are ye weary of your lives,
Or are your natural wits too dull to see
That ye are standing, not upon the brink,
But in the midst of mortal jeopardy?
Nay, had I not kept watch this weary while,
Here at the door, your plot had slipped inside
Ere ye yourselves had entered. As it is,
My watchfulness has fended this mishap.
Now that your wordy eloquence has an end,
And your insatiate cries of joy, go in.

εἴσω παρέλθεθ', ὡς τὸ μὲν μέλλειν κακὸν
ἐν τοῖς τοιούτοις ἔστ', ἀπηλλάχθαι δ' ἀκμή.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πῶς οὖν ἔχει τἀντεῦθεν εἰσιόντι μοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

καλῶς· ὑπάρχει γάρ σε μὴ γνῶναί τινα. 1340

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ἤγγειλας, ὡς ἔοικεν, ὡς τεθνηκότα.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

εἷς τῶν ἐν Ἅιδου μάνθαν' ἐνθάδ' ὢν ἀνήρ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

χαίρουσιν οὖν τούτοισιν; ἢ τίνες λόγοι;

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

τελουμένων εἴποιμ' ἄν· ὡς δὲ νῦν ἔχει,
καλῶς τὰ κείνων πάντα, καὶ τὰ μὴ καλῶς.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τίς οὗτός ἐστ', ἀδελφέ; πρὸς θεῶν φράσον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐχὶ ξυνίης;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὐδέ γ' ἐς θυμὸν φέρω.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτῳ μ' ἔδωκας εἰς χέρας ποτέ;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ποίῳ; τί φωνεῖς;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὗ τὸ Φωκέων πέδον
ὑπεξεπέμφθην σῇ προμηθίᾳ χεροῖν. 1350

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἦ κεῖνος οὗτος, ὅν ποτ' ἐκ πολλῶν ἐγὼ
μόνον προσηῦρον πιστὸν ἐν πατρὸς φόνῳ;

'Tis ill delaying in such case, and well
To make an end.

ORESTES

How shall I fare within?

AGED SERVANT

Right well; to start with, thou art known to none.

ORESTES

Thou hast reported, I presume, my death.

AGED SERVANT

They'll speak of thee as though thou wert a shade

ORESTES

And are they glad thereat, or what say they?

AGED SERVANT

I'll tell thee when the time is ripe: meanwhile
Whate'er they do, however ill, is well.

ELECTRA

I pray thee, brother, tell me who is this?

ORESTES

Dost thou not see?

ELECTRA

I know not, nor can guess.

ORESTES

Not know the man to whom thou gav'st me once?

ELECTRA

What man? how mean'st thou?

ORESTES

He that stole me hence,
Through thy forethought, and safe to Phocis bore.

ELECTRA

Can this be he who, when our sire was slain,
Faithful among the many false I found?

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

ὅδ᾿ ἐστί· μή μ᾿ ἔλεγχε πλείοσιν λόγοις.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατον φῶς, ὦ μόνος σωτὴρ δόμων
᾿Αγαμέμνονος, πῶς ἦλθες; ἦ σὺ κεῖνος εἶ,
ὃς τόνδε κἄμ᾿ ἔσωσας ἐκ πολλῶν πόνων;
ὦ φίλταται μὲν χεῖρες, ἥδιστον δ᾿ ἔχων
ποδῶν ὑπηρέτημα, πῶς οὕτω πάλαι
ξυνών μ᾿ ἔληθες οὐδ᾿ ἔφαινες, ἀλλά με
λόγοις ἀπώλλυς, ἔργ᾿ ἔχων ἥδιστ᾿ ἐμοί; 1360
χαῖρ᾿, ὦ πάτερ· πατέρα γὰρ εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ·
χαῖρ᾿· ἴσθι δ᾿ ὡς μάλιστά σ᾿ ἀνθρώπων ἐγὼ
ἤχθηρα κἀφίλησ᾿ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ μιᾷ.

ΠΑΙΔΑΓΩΓΟΣ

ἀρκεῖν δοκεῖ μοι· τοὺς γὰρ ἐν μέσῳ λόγους
πολλαὶ κυκλοῦνται νύκτες ἡμέραι τ᾿ ἴσαι,
αἳ ταῦτά σοι δείξουσιν, ᾿Ηλέκτρα, σαφῆ.
σφῷν δ᾿ ἐννέπω γε τοῖν παρεστώτοιν ὅτι
νῦν καιρὸς ἔρδειν· νῦν Κλυταιμνήστρα μόνη,
νῦν οὔτις ἀνδρῶν ἔνδον· εἰ δ᾿ ἐφέξετον,
φροντίζεθ᾿ ὡς τούτοις τε καὶ σοφωτέροις 1370
ἄλλοισι τούτων πλείοσιν μαχούμενοι.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἂν μακρῶν ἔθ᾿ ἡμὶν οὐδὲν ἂν λόγων,
Πυλάδη, τόδ᾿ εἴη τοὔργον, ἀλλ᾿ ὅσον τάχος
χωρεῖν ἔσω, πατρῷα προσκύσανθ᾿ ἕδη
θεῶν, ὅσοιπερ πρόπυλα ναίουσιν τάδε.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἄναξ Ἄπολλον, ἵλεως αὐτοῖν κλύε

ORESTES

'Tis he; let that suffice thee; ask no more.

ELECTRA

O happy day! O sole deliverer
Of Agamemnon's house, how cam'st thou hither?
Art thou indeed our saviour who redeemed
From endless woes my brother and myself?
O hands beloved, O messenger whose feet
Were bringers of glad tidings, how so long
Couldst thou be with me and remain unknown,
Stay me with feignèd fables and conceal
The truth that gave me life? Hail, father, hail!
For 'tis a father whom I seem to see.
Verily no man in the self-same day
Was hated so and so much loved as thou.

AGED SERVANT

Enough methinks; the tale 'twixt then and now—
Many revolving nights and days as many
Shall serve, Electra, to unfold it all.
(*To* ORESTES *and* PYLADES)
Why stand ye here! 'tis time for you to act,
Now Clytemnestra is alone; no man
Is now within; but, if ye stay your hand,
Not only with her house-carls will ye fight
But with a troop more numerous and more skilled.

ORESTES

Our business, Pylades, would seem to crave
No longer parley; let us instantly
Enter, but ere we enter first adore
The gods who keep the threshold of the house.

[ORESTES *and* PYLADES *enter the palace.*

ELECTRA

O King Apollo! lend a gracious ear

ἐμοῦ τε πρὸς τούτοισιν, ἥ σε πολλὰ δὴ
ἀφ' ὧν ἔχοιμι λιπαρεῖ προὔστην χερί.
νῦν δ', ὦ Λύκει' Ἄπολλον, ἐξ οἵων ἔχω
αἰτῶ, προπίτνω, λίσσομαι, γενοῦ πρόφρων 1380
ἡμῖν ἀρωγὸς τῶνδε τῶν βουλευμάτων,
καὶ δεῖξον ἀνθρώποισι τἀπιτίμια
τῆς δυσσεβείας οἷα δωροῦνται θεοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἴδεθ' ὅποι προνέμεται *στρ.*
τὸ δυσέριστον αἷμα φυσῶν Ἄρης.
βεβᾶσιν ἄρτι δωμάτων ὑπόστεγοι
μετάδρομοι κακῶν πανουργημάτων ἄφυκτοι κύνες,
ὥστ' οὐ μακρὰν ἔτ' ἀμμενεῖ
τοὐμὸν φρενῶν ὄνειρον αἰωρούμενον. 1390

παράγεται γὰρ ἐνέρων *ἀντ.*
δολιόπους ἀρωγὸς εἴσω στέγας,
ἀρχαιόπλουτα πατρὸς εἰς ἑδώλια,
νεακόνητον αἷμα χειροῖν ἔχων· ὁ Μαίας δὲ παῖς
Ἑρμῆς σφ' ἄγει δόλον σκότῳ
κρύψας πρὸς αὐτὸ τέρμα κοὐκέτ' ἀμμένει.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ φίλταται γυναῖκες, ἄνδρες αὐτίκα *στρ.*
τελοῦσι τοὔργον· ἀλλὰ σῖγα πρόσμενε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πῶς δή; τί νῦν πράσσουσιν;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἡ μὲν ἐς τάφον 1400
λέβητα κοσμεῖ, τὼ δ' ἐφέστατον πέλας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σὺ δ' ἐκτὸς ᾖξας πρὸς τί;

To them and me, to me too who so oft
Laid on thy shrine with humble hands my best.
And now with vows (I cannot offer more),
Apollo, Lord Lycean, I beseech,
Implore, adjure thee, prosper this our work,
Defend the right and show to godless men
How the gods vindicate impiety.

CHORUS

Breathing out blood and vengeance, lo! (*Str.*)
Stalks Ares, sure though slow.
E'en now the hounds are on the trail;
Within, the sinners at their coming quail.
A little while and death shall realise
The vision that now floats before mine eyes.

For now within the house is led (*Ant.*)
By stealth the champion of the dead;
He treads once more the ancestral hall of kings,
And death new-whetted in his hands he brings.
Great Maia's son conducts him on his way
And shrouds his guile and brooks not more delay.

ELECTRA

O dearest women, even as I speak (*Str.*)
The men are at their work; but not a word.

CHORUS

What work? what are they at?

ELECTRA

E'en now she decks
The urn for burial and the pair stand by.

CHORUS

Why spedst thou forth?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

φρουρήσουσ᾽ ὅπως
Αἴγισθος ἡμᾶς μὴ λάθῃ μολὼν ἔσω.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

αἰαῖ. ἰὼ στέγαι
φίλων ἔρημοι, τῶν δ᾽ ἀπολλύντων πλέαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

βοᾷ τις ἔνδον· οὐκ ἀκούετ᾽, ὦ φίλαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἤκουσ᾽ ἀνήκουστα δύστανος, ὥστε φρῖξαι.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαιν᾽· Αἴγισθε, ποῦ ποτ᾽ ὢν κυρεῖς;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἰδοὺ μάλ᾽ αὖ θροεῖ τις.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὦ τέκνον τέκνον, 1410
οἴκτιρε τὴν τεκοῦσαν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐκ σέθεν
ᾠκτίρεθ᾽ οὗτος οὐδ᾽ ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ πόλις, ὦ γενεὰ τάλαινα, νῦν σοι [1]
μοῖρα καθαμερία φθίνει φθίνει.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὤμοι πέπληγμαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

παῖσον, εἰ σθένεις, διπλῆν.

ΚΛΥΤΑΙΜΝΗΣΤΡΑ

ὤμοι μάλ᾽ αὖθις.

[1] νῦν σε MSS., corr. R. Whitelaw

ELECTRA

To keep a watch for fear
Aegisthus should forestall us unawares.

CLYTEMNESTRA (*within*)

Woe! woe! O woeful house,
Of friends forsaken, full of murderers!

ELECTRA

Listen! a cry within—hear ye not, friends?

CHORUS

I heard and shuddered—oh, an awesome cry.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Ah woe is me! Aegisthus, where art thou?

ELECTRA

Hark; once again a wail.

CLYTEMNESTRA

O son, my son,
Have pity on thy mother!

ELECTRA

Thou hadst none
On him or on the father that begat him.

CHORUS

Unhappy realm and house,
The curse that dogged thee day by day
Is dying, dying fast.

CLYTEMNESTRA

I am stricken, ah!

ELECTRA

Strike, if thou canst, again.

CLYTEMNESTRA

Woe, woe is me once more!

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

εἰ γὰρ Αἰγίσθῳ θ' ὁμοῦ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τελοῦσ' ἀραί· ζῶσιν οἱ γᾶς ὑπαὶ κείμενοι.
παλίρρυτον γὰρ αἷμ' ὑπεξαιροῦσι τῶν 1420
κτανόντων οἱ πάλαι θανόντες.

καὶ μὴν πάρεισιν οἵδε· φοινία δὲ χεὶρ ἀντ.
στάζει θυηλῆς Ἄρεος, οὐδ' ἔχω ψέγειν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

Ὀρέστα, πῶς κυρεῖτε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τἀν δόμοισι μὲν
καλῶς, Ἀπόλλων εἰ καλῶς ἐθέσπισεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τέθνηκεν ἡ τάλαινα;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μηκέτ' ἐκφοβοῦ
μητρῷον ὥς σε λῆμ' ἀτιμάσει ποτέ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

παύσασθε· λεύσσω γὰρ Αἴγισθον ἐκ προδήλου.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ὦ παῖδες, οὐκ ἄψορρον;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ 1430

εἰσορᾶτε ποῦ
τὸν ἄνδρ';

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὗτος ἐκ προαστίου
χωρεῖ γεγηθὼς ⏑ – ⏑ – ⏑ –.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βᾶτε κατ' ἀντιθύρων ὅσον τάχιστα,
νῦν, τὰ πρὶν εὖ θέμενοι, τάδ' ὡς πάλιν.

ELECTRA

I would that woe
Were for Aegisthus not for thee alone.

CHORUS

The curses work ; the buried live again,
And blood for blood, the slayer's blood they drain,
The ghosts of victims long since slain.

Enter ORESTES *and* PYLADES *from the palace.*

Lo they come forth with gory hands that reek (*Ant.*)
Of sacrifice to Ares—'twas done well.

ELECTRA

How have ye sped, Orestes?

ORESTES.

All within
Is well, if Phoebus' oracle spake well.

ELECTRA

The wretched woman's dead?

ORESTES

No longer fear
Thy mother's arrogance will flout thee more.

CHORUS

Cease, for I see Aegisthus full in sight.

ELECTRA

Back, youths, back to the house!

ORESTES

Where see ye him?

ELECTRA

Approaching from the suburb with an air
Of exultation. He is ours!

CHORUS

Quick to the palace doorway! half your work
Is well done ; do no less well what remains.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

θάρσει· τελοῦμεν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ᾗ νοεῖς ἔπειγέ νυν.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ δὴ βέβηκα.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

τἀνθάδ' ἂν μέλοιτ' ἐμοί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δι' ὠτὸς ἂν παῦρά γ' ὡς ἠπίως ἐννέπειν
πρὸς ἄνδρα τόνδε συμφέροι, λαθραῖον ὡς 1440
ὀρούσῃ πρὸς δίκας ἀγῶνα.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τίς οἶδεν ὑμῶν, ποῦ ποθ' οἱ Φωκῆς ξένοι,
οὕς φασ' Ὀρέστην ἡμὶν ἀγγεῖλαι βίον
λελοιπόθ' ἱππικοῖσιν ἐν ναυαγίοις;
σέ τοι, σὲ κρίνω, ναὶ σέ, τὴν ἐν τῷ πάρος
χρόνῳ θρασεῖαν· ὡς μάλιστα σοὶ μέλειν
οἶμαι, μάλιστα δ' ἂν κατειδυῖαν φράσαι.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔξοιδα· πῶς γὰρ οὐχί; συμφορᾶς γὰρ ἂν
ἔξωθεν εἴην τῶν ἐμῶν τῆς φιλτάτης.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ποῦ δῆτ' ἂν εἶεν οἱ ξένοι; δίδασκέ με. 1450

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

ἔνδον· φίλης γὰρ προξένου κατήνυσαν.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἦ καὶ θανόντ' ἤγγειλαν ὡς ἐτητύμως;

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ κἀπέδειξαν, οὐ λόγῳ μόνον.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

πάρεστ' ἄρ' ἡμὶν ὥστε κἀμφανῆ μαθεῖν;

ORESTES

Fear not, we shall.

ELECTRA

Then speed thee on thy way.

ORESTES

See, I am gone.

ELECTRA

Leave what is here to me.

[*Exeunt* ORESTES *and* PYLADES; AEGISTHUS *approaches.*

CHORUS

'Twere not amiss to breathe some soft words in his ear,
That he may blindly rush into the lists of doom.

AEGISTHUS

Could any of you tell me where to find
The Phocian strangers who, I hear, have brought
News of Orestes midst the chariots wrecked?
Thee, thee I question, thee, in former days
So froward: it concerns thee most, methinks,
And thou, as best informed, canst tell me best.

ELECTRA

I know for sure, else were I unconcerned
In what has happened to my nearest kin.

AEGISTHUS

Where then are these newcomers? Tell me straight.

ELECTRA

Within; they've won their kindly hostess' heart.

AEGISTHUS

Did they in very truth report his death?

ELECTRA

They did; and more, they showed us the dead man.

AEGISTHUS

May I too view the body to make sure?

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

πάρεστι δῆτα, καὶ μάλ' ἄζηλος θέα.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἦ πολλὰ χαίρειν μ' εἶπας οὐκ εἰωθότως.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

χαίροις ἄν, εἴ σοι χαρτὰ τυγχάνοι τάδε.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

σιγᾶν ἄνωγα κἀναδεικνύναι πύλας
πᾶσιν Μυκηναίοισιν Ἀργείοις θ' ὁρᾶν,
ὡς εἴ τις αὐτῶν ἐλπίσιν κεναῖς πάρος 1460
ἐξῄρετ' ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε, νῦν ὁρῶν νεκρὸν
στόμια δέχηται τἀμὰ μηδὲ πρὸς βίαν
ἐμοῦ κολαστοῦ προστυχὼν φύσῃ φρένας.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

καὶ δὴ τελεῖται τἀπ' ἐμοῦ· τῷ γὰρ χρόνῳ
νοῦν ἔσχον, ὥστε συμφέρειν τοῖς κρείσσοσιν.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, δέδορκα φάσμ' ἄνευ φθόνου μὲν οὐ
πεπτωκός· εἰ δ' ἔπεστι νέμεσις, οὐ λέγω.
χαλᾶτε πᾶν κάλυμμ' ἀπ' ὀφθαλμῶν, ὅπως
τὸ συγγενές τοι κἀπ' ἐμοῦ θρήνων τύχῃ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

αὐτὸς σὺ βάσταζ'· οὐκ ἐμὸν τόδ', ἀλλὰ σόν, 1470
τὸ ταῦθ' ὁρᾶν τε καὶ προσηγορεῖν φίλως.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἀλλ' εὖ παραινεῖς κἀπιπείσομαι· σὺ δέ,
εἴ που κατ' οἶκόν μοι Κλυταιμνήστρα, κάλει.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

αὕτη πέλας σοῦ· μηκέτ' ἄλλοσε σκόπει.

ELECTRA

Thou mayst, but 'tis a gruesome spectacle.

AEGISTHUS

Thou givest me much joy against thy wont.

ELECTRA

I wish thee joy, if here is food for joy.

AEGISTHUS

Silence! attend! throw open wide the gate,
For all Mycenae, Argos all, to see.
If any heretofore was puffed with hopes
Of this pretender, now he sees him dead,
Let him in time accept my yoke, nor wait
Wisdom by chastisement to learn too late.

ELECTRA

My lesson's learnt already; time hath taught me
The wisdom of consenting with the strong.

(*The scene opens showing a shrouded corpse with* ORESTES *and* PYLADES *beside it.*)

AEGISTHUS

O Zeus, I look upon this form laid low
By jealousy of Heaven, but if my words
Seem to thee overbold, be they unsaid.
Take from the face the face-cloth; I, as kin,
I too would pay my tribute of lament.

ORESTES

Lift it thyself; 'tis not for me but thee
To see and kindly greet what lieth here.

AEGISTHUS

Well said, so will I. (*To* ELECTRA.) If she be within
Go call me Clytemnestra, I would see her—.

ORESTES

She is beside thee; look not otherwhere.

(AEGISTHUS *lifts the face-cloth.*)

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

οἴμοι, τί λεύσσω;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τίνα φοβεῖ; τίν' ἀγνοεῖς;

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τίνων ποτ' ἀνδρῶν ἐν μέσοις ἀρκυστάτοις
πέπτωχ' ὁ τλήμων;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ αἰσθάνει πάλαι
ζῶντας[1] *θανοῦσιν οὕνεκ' ἀνταυδᾷς ἴσα;*

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

οἴμοι, ξυνῆκα τοὔπος· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ' ὅπως 1480
ὅδ' οὐκ Ὀρέστης ἔσθ' ὁ προσφωνῶν ἐμέ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

καὶ μάντις ὢν ἄριστος ἐσφάλλου πάλαι.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὄλωλα δὴ δείλαιος. ἀλλά μοι πάρες
κἂν σμικρὸν εἰπεῖν.

ΗΛΕΚΤΡΑ

μὴ πέρα λέγειν ἔα
πρὸς θεῶν, ἀδελφέ, μηδὲ μηκύνειν λόγους.
τί γὰρ βροτῶν ἂν σὺν κακοῖς μεμιγμένων
θνῄσκειν ὁ μέλλων οὐ χρόνου κέρδος φέροι;
ἀλλ' ὡς τάχιστα κτεῖνε καὶ κτανὼν πρόθες
ταφεῦσιν, ὧν τόνδ' εἰκός ἐστι τυγχάνειν,
ἄποπτον ἡμῶν· ὡς ἐμοὶ τόδ' ἂν κακῶν 1490
μόνον γένοιτο τῶν πάλαι λυτήριον.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

χωροῖς ἂν εἴσω σὺν τάχει· λόγων γὰρ οὐ
νῦν ἐστιν ἁγών, ἀλλὰ σῆς ψυχῆς πέρι.

[1] *ζῶν τοῖς* MSS., Tyrwhitt corr.

AEGISTHUS

O horror!

ORESTES

Why dost start? is the face strange?

AEGISTHUS

Who spread the net wherein, O woe is me,
I lie enmeshed?

ORESTES

Hast thou not learnt ere this
The dead of whom thou spakest are alive?

AEGISTHUS

Alas! I read thy riddle; 'tis none else
Than thou, Orestes, whom I now address.

ORESTES

A seer so wise, and yet befooled so long!

AEGISTHUS

O I am spoiled, undone! yet suffer me,
One little word.

ELECTRA

Brother, in heaven's name
Let him not speak a word or plead his cause.
When a poor wretch is in the toils of fate
What can a brief reprieve avail him? No,
Slay him outright and having slain him give
His corse to such grave-makers as is meet,
Far from our sight; for me no otherwise
Can he wipe out the memory of past wrongs.

ORESTES (*to* AEGISTHUS)

Quick, get thee in; the issue lies not now
In words; the case is tried and thou must die.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

τί δ' ἐς δομους ἄγεις με; πῶς, τόδ' εἰ καλὸν
τοὔργον, σκότου δεῖ κοὐ πρόχειρος εἶ κτανεῖν;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μὴ τάσσε· χώρει δ' ἔνθαπερ κατέκτανες
πατέρα τὸν ἀμόν, ὡς ἂν ἐν ταὐτῷ θάνῃς,

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἦ πᾶσ' ἀνάγκη τήνδε τὴν στέγην ἰδεῖν
τά τ' ὄντα καὶ μέλλοντα Πελοπιδῶν κακά;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

τὰ γοῦν σ'· ἐγώ σοι μάντις εἰμὶ τῶνδ' ἄκρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐ πατρῴαν τὴν τέχνην ἐκόμπασας. 1500

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

πόλλ' ἀντιφωνεῖς, ἡ δ' ὁδὸς βραδύνεται.
ἀλλ' ἕρφ'.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ὑφηγοῦ.

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

σοὶ βαδιστέον πάρος.

ΑΙΓΙΣΘΟΣ

ἦ μὴ φύγω σε;

ΟΡΕΣΤΗΣ

μὴ μὲν οὖν καθ' ἡδονὴν
θάνῃς· φυλάξαι δεῖ με τοῦτό σοι πικρόν.
χρῆν δ' εὐθὺς εἶναι τήνδε τοῖς πᾶσιν δίκην,
ὅστις πέρα πράσσειν τι τῶν νόμων θέλει,
κτείνειν· τὸ γὰρ πανοῦργον οὐκ ἂν ἦν πολύ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀτρέως, ὡς πολλὰ παθὸν
δι' ἐλευθερίας μόλις ἐξῆλθες
τῇ νῦν ὁρμῇ τελεωθέν. 1510

AEGISTHUS

Why hale me indoors? if my doom be just,
What need of darkness? Why not slay me here?

ORESTES

'Tis not for thee to order; go within;
Where thou didst slay my father thou must die.

AEGISTHUS

Ah! is there need this palace should behold
All woes of Pelops' line, now and to come?

ORESTES

Thine own they shall; thus much I can predict.

AEGISTHUS

Thy skill as seer derives not from thy sire.

ORESTES

Thou bandiest words; our going is delayed.
Go.

AEGISTHUS

Lead the way.

ORESTES

No, thou must go the first.

AEGISTHUS

Lest I escape?

ORESTES

Nay, not to let thee choose
The manner of thy death; thou must be spared
No bitterness of death, and well it were
If on transgressors swift this sentence fall,
Slay him; so wickedness should less abound.

CHORUS

House of Atreus! thou hast passed
Through the fire and won at last
Freedom, perfected to-day
By this glorious essay.

TRACHINIAE

ARGUMENT

DEIANIRA, *alarmed at the long absence of her husband, resolves to send their son Hyllus in quest of his father. When he left home Heracles had told her that in fifteen months would come the crisis of his fate—either death or glory and rest from his toils. As she meditates, Lichas, the henchman of Heracles, comes in sight, tells her that his master is safe and will shortly follow. He is now at Cape Cenaeum in Euboea, about to raise an altar to Zeus in honour of his victories. With Lichas are a train of captive maidens and among them she espies Iolè. By cross-questioning she learns that Heracles has transferred to Iolè his love, and determines to win it back by means of a love-charm that the Centaur Nessus had left to her as he lay dying. So she sends by the hand of Lichas a festal robe besmeared with what proves to be a burning poison. Too late she discovers her mistake. The flock of wool that she had used to apply the charm and flung away smoulders self-consumed before her eyes. Hyllus returns from Euboea and denounces his mother as a murderer, describing the agonies of his tortured father.*

ARGUMENT

At the news Deianira passes within the house and slays herself with a sword. The dying Heracles is borne home on a litter. He gives his last injunctions to Hyllus, to bear him to Mount Oeta, there burn him on a pyre, and then to return and take Iolè to wife. With a bitter word against the gods who have thus afflicted their own son, the noblest man on earth, Hyllus gives an unwilling consent.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ΧΟΡΟΣ ΠΑΡΘΕΝΩΝ ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΩΝ

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

HERACLES, *son of Zeus and Alcmena.*

DEIANIRA, *daughter of Oeneus, his wife*

HYLLUS, *their son.*

LICHAS, *herald of Heracles.*

A MESSENGER.

NURSE.

OLD MAN.

IOLE, *daughter of Eurytus, captive wife to Heracles* } *mute characters.*
CAPTIVE WOMEN. }

CHORUS OF TRACHINIAN MAIDENS.

SCENE: Before the house of Heracles at Trachis.

ΤΡΑΧΙΝΙΑΙ

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

Λόγος μέν ἐστ' ἀρχαῖος ἀνθρώπων φανείς,
ὡς οὐκ ἂν αἰῶν' ἐκμάθοις βροτῶν, πρὶν ἂν
θάνῃ τις, οὔτ' εἰ χρηστὸς οὔτ' εἴ τῳ κακός·
ἐγὼ δὲ τὸν ἐμόν, καὶ πρὶν εἰς Ἅιδου μολεῖν,
ἔξοιδ' ἔχουσα δυστυχῆ τε καὶ βαρύν,
ἥτις πατρὸς μὲν ἐν δόμοισιν Οἰνέως
ναίουσ' ἔτ'[1] ἐν Πλευρῶνι νυμφείων ὄκνον
ἄλγιστον ἔσχον, εἴ τις Αἰτωλὶς γυνή.
μνηστὴρ γὰρ ἦν μοι ποταμός, Ἀχελῷον λέγω,
ὅς μ' ἐν τρισὶν μορφαῖσιν ἐξῄτει πατρός, 10
φοιτῶν ἐναργὴς ταῦρος, ἄλλοτ' αἰόλος
δράκων ἑλικτός, ἄλλοτ' ἀνδρείῳ κύτει
βούπρῳρος· ἐκ δὲ δασκίου γενειάδος
κρουνοὶ διερραίνοντο κρηναίου ποτοῦ.
τοιόνδ' ἐγὼ μνηστῆρα προσδεδεγμένη
δύστηνος αἰεὶ κατθανεῖν ἐπηυχόμην,
πρὶν τῆσδε κοίτης ἐμπελασθῆναί ποτε.
χρόνῳ δ' ἐν ὑστέρῳ μέν, ἀσμένῃ δέ μοι,
ὁ κλεινὸς ἦλθε Ζηνὸς Ἀλκμήνης τε παῖς·
ὃς εἰς ἀγῶνα τῷδε συμπεσὼν μάχης 20
ἐκλύεταί με· καὶ τρόπον μὲν ἂν πόνων
οὐκ ἂν διείποιμ'· οὐ γὰρ οἶδ'· ἀλλ' ὅστις ἦν

[1] ἔτ' added by Erfurdt.

TRACHINIAE

Enter DEIANIRA *and* NURSE.

DEIANIRA

THERE is an old-world saying current still,
" Of no man canst thou judge the destiny
To call it good or evil, till he die."
But I, before I pass into the world
Of shadows, know *my* lot is hard and sad.
E'en in my childhood's home, while yet I dwelt
At Pleuron with my father, I had dread
Of marriage more than any Aetolian maid;
For my first wooer was a river god,
Acheloüs, who in triple form appeared
To sue my father Oeneus for my hand,
Now as a bull, now as a sinuous snake
With glittering coils, and now in bulk a man
With front of ox, while from his shaggy beard
Runnels of fountain-water spouted forth.
In terror of so strange a wooer, I
Was ever praying death might end my woes,
Before I came to such a marriage bed.
Then to my joy, though long delayed, the son
Of Zeus and of Alcmena, good at need,
Grappled the monster and delivered me.
The circumstance and manner of that fight
I cannot tell, not knowing; whoso watched it,

θακῶν ἀταρβὴς τῆς θέας, ὅδ' ἂν λέγοι·
ἐγὼ γὰρ ἤμην ἐκπεπληγμένη φόβῳ
μή μοι τὸ κάλλος ἄλγος ἐξεύροι ποτέ.
τέλος δ' ἔθηκε Ζεὺς ἀγώνιος καλῶς,
εἰ δὴ καλῶς. λέχος γὰρ Ἡρακλεῖ κριτὸν
ξυστᾶσ' ἀεί τιν' ἐκ φόβου φόβον τρέφω,
κείνου προκηραίνουσα· νὺξ γὰρ εἰσάγει
καὶ νὺξ ἀπωθεῖ διαδεδεγμένη πόνον. 30
κἀφύσαμεν δὴ παῖδας, οὓς κεῖνός ποτε,
γήτης ὅπως ἄρουραν ἔκτοπον λαβών,
σπείρων μόνον προσεῖδε κἀξαμῶν ἅπαξ.
τοιοῦτος αἰὼν εἰς δόμους τε κἀκ δόμων
αἰεὶ τὸν ἄνδρ' ἔπεμπε λατρεύοντά τῳ.
νῦν δ' ἡνίκ' ἄθλων τῶνδ' ὑπερτελὴς ἔφυ,
ἐνταῦθα δὴ μάλιστα ταρβήσασ' ἔχω.
ἐξ οὗ γὰρ ἔκτα κεῖνος Ἰφίτου βίαν,
ἡμεῖς μὲν ἐν Τραχῖνι τῇδ' ἀνάστατοι
ξένῳ παρ' ἀνδρὶ ναίομεν, κεῖνος δ' ὅπου 40
βέβηκεν οὐδεὶς οἶδε· πλὴν ἐμοὶ πικρὰς
ὠδῖνας αὐτοῦ προσβαλὼν ἀποίχεται.
σχεδὸν δ' ἐπίσταμαί τι πῆμ' ἔχοντά νιν·
χρόνον γὰρ οὐχὶ βαιόν, ἀλλ' ἤδη δέκα
μῆνας πρὸς ἄλλοις πέντ' ἀκήρυκτος μένει.
κἀστίν τι δεινὸν πῆμα· τοιαύτην ἐμοὶ
δέλτον λιπὼν ἔστειχε, τὴν ἐγὼ θαμὰ
θεοῖς ἀρῶμαι πημονῆς ἄτερ λαβεῖν.

ΘΕΡΑΠΑΙΝΑ

δέσποινα Δηάνειρα, πολλὰ μέν σ' ἐγὼ
κατεῖδον ἤδη πανδάκρυτ' ὀδύρματα 50
τὴν Ἡράκλειον ἔξοδον γοωμένην·
νῦν δ', εἰ δίκαιον τοὺς ἐλευθέρους φρενοῦν

Indifferent to the issue, might describe.
For me—I sat distracted by the dread
That beauty in the end might prove my bane.
But Zeus who holds the arbitrament of war
Ordered it well, if well indeed it be.
For since, his chosen bride, I shared the home
Of Heracles, my cares have never ceased;
Terror on terror follows, dread on dread,
And one night's trouble drives the last night's out.
Children were born to us, but them he sees
E'en as the tiller of a distant field
Sees it at seedtime, sees it once again
At harvest, and no more. Such life was his
That kept him roaming to and fro from home,
To drudge for some taskmaster. And to-day
When he has overcome these many toils,
To-day I am terror-stricken most of all.
For since he slew the doughty Iphitus,
We have been dwelling with a stranger, here
In Trachis, banished from our home, and he—
None knoweth where he bides; but this I know,
He has gone and left me here to yearn and pine.
Surely some mischief has befallen him,
(For since he went an age—ten long, long months,
And other five—has passed, and not a word),
Some dread calamity, as signifies
This tablet that he left me. Oh! how oft
I've prayed it prove no harbinger of woe.

NURSE

My lady Deianira, many a time
I've listened to thy lamentable plaints
And groanings for the absence of thy lord.
Now, if I seem not overbold, a slave

γνώμαισι δούλαις, κἀμὲ χρὴ φράσαι τὸ σόν·
πῶς παισὶ μὲν τοσοῖσδε πληθύεις, ἀτὰρ
ἀνδρὸς κατὰ ζήτησιν οὐ πέμπεις τινά,
μάλιστα δ' ὅνπερ εἰκὸς Ὕλλον, εἰ πατρὸς
νέμοι τιν' ὤραν τοῦ καλῶς πράσσειν δοκεῖν;
ἐγγὺς δ' ὅδ' αὐτὸς ἀρτίπους θρῴσκει δόμους,
ὥστ' εἴ τί σοι πρὸς καιρὸν ἐννέπειν δοκῶ,
πάρεστι χρῆσθαι τἀνδρὶ τοῖς τ' ἐμοῖς λόγοις. 60

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ, κἀξ ἀγεννήτων ἄρα
μῦθοι καλῶς πίπτουσιν· ἥδε γὰρ γυνὴ
δούλη μέν, εἴρηκεν δ' ἐλεύθερον λόγον.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ποῖον; δίδαξον, μῆτερ, εἰ διδακτά μοι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

σὲ πατρὸς οὕτω δαρὸν ἐξενωμένου
τὸ μὴ πυθέσθαι ποῦ 'στιν, αἰσχύνην φέρειν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οἶδα, μύθοις εἴ τι πιστεύειν χρεών.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ ποῦ κλύεις νιν, τέκνον, ἱδρῦσθαι χθονός;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

τὸν μὲν παρελθόντ' ἄροτον ἐν μήκει χρόνου
Λυδῇ γυναικί φασί νιν λάτριν πονεῖν. 70

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πᾶν τοίνυν, εἰ καὶ τοῦτ' ἔτλη, κλύοι τις ἄν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐξαφεῖται τοῦδέ γ', ὡς ἐγὼ κλύω.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ δῆτα νῦν ζῶν ἢ θανὼν ἀγγέλλεται;

Would lend her counsel to a free-born dame.
Why, since thou art so rich in sons, not send
One on the quest, and Hyllus most of all?
Who could assist thee better, if he cares
To ascertain the safety of his sire?
And lo, I see him in the nick of time
Approaching hotfoot. Wherefore, if I seem
To speak in season, use my rede and him.

Enter HYLLUS.

DEIANIRA

My child, my boy! wise words in sooth may fall
From humble lips. This woman is a slave,
But her words breathe the spirit of the free.

HYLLUS

What, mother? tell me, if it may be told.

DEIANIRA

She said that never to have gone in search
Of thy long absent father brings thee shame.

HYLLUS

Nay, but if rumour's true, I know of him.

DEIANIRA

Where hast thou heard, my son, that he abides?

HYLLUS

Last season, so they say, the whole year through
He served as bondsman to a Lydian dame.

DEIANIRA

Naught would surprise me if he sank so low.

HYLLUS

Well, that disgrace is over, so I hear.

DEIANIRA

Where is he now reported, living or dead?

ΥΛΛΟΣ

Εὐβοΐδα χώραν φασίν, Εὐρύτου πόλιν,
ἐπιστρατεύειν αὐτὸν ἢ μέλλειν ἔτι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἆρ' οἶσθα δῆτ', ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἔλειπέ μοι
μαντεῖα πιστὰ τῆσδε τῆς χώρας πέρι;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

τὰ ποῖα, μῆτερ; τὸν λόγον γὰρ ἀγνοῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὡς ἢ τελευτὴν τοῦ βίου μέλλει τελεῖν
ἢ τοῦτον ἄρας ἆθλον εἰς τό γ' ὕστερον[1] 80
τὸν λοιπὸν ἤδη βίοτον εὐαίων' ἔχειν.
ἐν οὖν ῥοπῇ τοιᾷδε κειμένῳ, τέκνον,
οὐκ εἶ ξυνέρξων, ἡνίκ' ἢ σεσώσμεθα
[ἢ πίπτομεν σοῦ πατρὸς ἐξολωλότος]
κείνου βίον σώσαντος, ἢ οἰχόμεσθ' ἅμα;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἶμι, μῆτερ· εἰ δὲ θεσφάτων ἐγὼ
βάξιν κατῄδη τῶνδε, κἂν πάλαι παρῆ·
νῦν δ' ὁ ξυνήθης πότμος οὐκ εἴα[2] πατρὸς
ἡμᾶς προταρβεῖν οὐδὲ δειμαίνειν ἄγαν.
νῦν δ' ὡς ξυνίημ', οὐδὲν ἐλλείψω τὸ μὴ οὐ 90
πᾶσαν πυθέσθαι τῶνδ' ἀλήθειαν πέρι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

χώρει νυν, ὦ παῖ· καὶ γὰρ ὑστέρῳ τό γ' εὖ
πράσσειν, ἐπεὶ πύθοιτο, κέρδος ἐμπολᾷ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὃν αἰόλα νὺξ ἐναριζομένα στρ. α'
τίκτει κατευνάζει τε, φλογιζόμενον
Ἅλιον Ἅλιον αἰτῶ
τοῦτο καρῦξαι, τὸν Ἀλκμήνας πόθι μοι πόθι παῖς

[1] εἰς τὸν ὕστερον MSS., Reiske corr.
[2] ἐᾷ MSS., Vauvilliers corr.

HYLLUS

He wars, or is about to war, they say,
Against Euboea and King Eurytus.

DEIANIRA

Know'st thou, my son, that when he went away
He left sure oracles anent that land?

HYLLUS

What, mother? I ne'er heard of them before.

DEIANIRA

That either he should find his death, or when
He had achieved this final task, henceforth
Lead an unbroken life of peaceful ease.
Son, when his fate thus trembles in the scale,
Wilt thou not go to aid him? If he's saved,
We too are saved; if lost, we perish too.

HYLLUS

Ay, mother, I'll away; had I but known
Of this prediction I had long been gone.
But, as it was, his happy star forbade
Excess of fear or doubt; but, now I know,
No pains I'll spare to learn the perfect truth.

DEIANIRA

Go then, my son. However late the quest,
The bringer of good news is well repaid!

[*Exit* HYLLUS.

Enter CHORUS.

CHORUS

Child of star-bespangled Night, (*Str.* 1)
Born as she dies,
Laid to rest in a blaze of light,
Tell me, Sun-god, O tell me, where
Tarries the child of Alcmena fair;

ναιει ποτ', ὦ λαμπρᾷ στεροπᾷ φλεγέθων,
ἢ ποντίας αὐλῶνος ἢ δισσαῖσιν ἀπείροις κλιθείς, 100
εἴπ', ὦ κρατιστεύων κατ' ὄμμα.

ποθουμένᾳ γὰρ φρενὶ πυνθάνομαι ἀντ. α'
τὰν ἀμφινεικῆ Δηιάνειραν ἀεί,
οἶά τιν' ἄθλιον ὄρνιν,
οὔποτ' εὐνάζειν ἀδακρύτων βλεφάρων πόθον, ἀλλ'
εὔμναστον ἀνδρὸς δεῖμα τρέφουσαν ὁδοῦ
ἐνθυμίοις εὐναῖς ἀνανδρώτοισι τρύχεσθαι, κακὰν 110
δύστανον ἐλπίζουσαν αἶσαν.

στρ. β'

πολλὰ γὰρ ὥστ' ἀκάμαντος ἢ νότου ἢ βορέα τις
κύματ' ἂν εὐρέϊ πόντῳ βάντ' ἐπιόντα τ' ἴδοι,
οὕτω δὲ τὸν Καδμογενῆ στρέφει,[1] τὸ δ' αὔξει,
βιότου πολύπονον ὥσπερ πέλαγος
Κρήσιον. ἀλλά τις θεῶν αἰὲν ἀναμπλάκητον Ἅιδα
σφε δόμων ἐρύκει. 120

ἀντ. β'

ὧν ἐπιμεμφομένα σ' αἰδοῖα[2] μέν, ἀντία δ' οἴσω.
φαμὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀποτρύειν ἐλπίδα τὰν ἀγαθὰν
χρῆναί σ'· ἀνάλγητα γὰρ οὐδ' ὁ πάντα κραίνων
βασιλεὺς ἐπέβαλε θνατοῖς Κρονίδας·
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πῆμα καὶ χαρὰ πᾶσι κυκλοῦσιν, οἷον
ἄρκτου στροφάδες κέλευθοι. 130

μένει γὰρ οὔτ' αἰόλα
νὺξ βροτοῖσιν οὔτε κῆρες

[1] τρέφει MSS., Reiske corr.
[2] ἀδεῖα MSS., Musgrave corr.

Thou from whose eyes,
Keen as lightning, naught can hide.
Doth he on either mainland bide?
Roams he over the sea straits driven?
Thou, omniscient eye of heaven,
Declare, declare!

For like bird bereft of her mate (*Ant.* 1)
(Sad my tale)
Deianira, desolate,
She the maiden of many wooed,
Pines by fears for her lord pursued;
Ever she bodes some instant harm
Ever she starts at a new alarm,
With vigils pale.

(*Str.* 2)
For as the tireless South or Northern blast
Billow on billow rolls o'er ocean wide,
So on the son of Cadmus follows fast
Sea upon sea of trouble, tide on tide;
And now he sinks, now rises; still some god
Is nigh to save him from Death's whelming flood.

(*Ant.* 2)
Bear with me, lady, if I seem to chide thee.
Why by despondency is fair hope slain?
Think that high Zeus, if evil now betide thee,
No human lot ordaineth free from pain;
But as the Bear revolves in heaven all night,
So mortals move 'twixt sorrow and delight.

The sheen of night with daybreak wanes;
Pleasure follows after pains.

οὔτε πλοῦτος, ἀλλ' ἄφαρ
βέβακε, τῷ δ' ἐπέρχεται
χαίρειν τε καὶ στέρεσθαι.
ἃ καὶ σὲ τὰν ἄνασσαν ἐλπίσιν λέγω
τάδ' αἰὲν ἴσχειν· ἐπεὶ τίς ὧδε
τέκνοισι Ζῆν' ἄβουλον εἶδεν; 140

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πεπυσμένη μέν, ὡς ἀπεικάσαι, πάρει
πάθημα τοὐμόν· ὡς δ' ἐγὼ θυμοφθορῶ,
μήτ' ἐκμάθοις παθοῦσα νῦν τ' ἄπειρος εἶ.
τὸ γὰρ νεάζον ἐν τοιοῖσδε βόσκεται
χώροισιν αὑτοῦ, καί νιν οὐ θάλπος θεοῦ
οὐδ' ὄμβρος οὐδὲ πνευμάτων οὐδὲν κλονεῖ,
ἀλλ' ἡδοναῖς ἄμοχθον ἐξαίρει βίον
ἐς τοῦθ' ἕως τις ἀντὶ παρθένου γυνὴ
κληθῇ λάβῃ τ' ἐν νυκτὶ φροντίδων μέρος,
ἤτοι πρὸς ἀνδρὸς ἢ τέκνων φοβουμένη. 150
τότ' ἄν τις εἰσίδοιτο, τὴν αὑτοῦ σκοπῶν
πρᾶξιν, κακοῖσιν οἷς ἐγὼ βαρύνομαι.
πάθη μὲν οὖν δὴ πόλλ' ἔγωγ' ἐκλαυσάμην·
ἓν δ', οἷον οὔπω πρόσθεν, αὐτίκ' ἐξερῶ.
ὁδὸν γὰρ ἦμος τὴν τελευταίαν ἄναξ
ὡρμᾶτ' ἀπ' οἴκων Ἡρακλῆς, τότ' ἐν δόμοις
λείπει παλαιὰν δέλτον ἐγγεγραμμένην
ξυνθήμαθ', ἁμοὶ πρόσθεν οὐκ ἔτλη ποτέ,
πολλοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐξιών, οὕτω φράσαι,
ἀλλ' ὥς τι δράσων εἷρπε κοὐ θανούμενος. 160
νῦν δ' ὡς ἔτ' οὐκ ὢν εἶπε μὲν λέχους ὅ τι
χρείη μ' ἑλέσθαι κτῆσιν, εἶπε δ' ἣν τέκνοις

If perchance to-day thou art sad,
Then another man is glad.
Gains with losses alternate;
Naught is constant in one state:
Ponder this, my Queen, nor let
Carking care thy spirit fret.
Tell me hast thou ever known
Zeus unmindful of his own?

DEIANIRA

Doubtless ye must have heard of my distress,
And therefore come; but how my heart is racked
Ye cannot know—pray God ye ne'er may know it
By suffering!
Like to us, the tender plant
Is reared and nurtured in some garden close;
Nor heat, nor rain, nor any breath of air
Vexes it, but unruffled, unperturbed,
It buds and blossoms in sequestered bliss;
So fare we till the maid is called a wife
And finds her married portion in the night—
Dread terror for her husband or her child.
Only the woman who by trial knows
The cares of wedlock knows what I endure.
Many have been my sorrows in the past,
But now of one, the woefullest of all,
I have to tell. When Heracles, my lord,
On his last travel was about to start,
He left an ancient tablet in the house,
Inscribed with characters that ne'er before,
However desperate the enterprise,
He would interpret; for he aye set forth
As one about to do and not to die.
This time, as on his death bed, he prescribed
Due portion of his substance as my dower,

μοῖραν πατρῴας γῆς διαιρετὸν νέμοι,
χρόνον προτάξας ὡς τρίμηνον ἡνίκα
χώρας ἀπείη κἀνιαύσιον βεβώς,
τότ' ἢ θανεῖν χρείη σφε τῷδε τῷ χρόνῳ
ἢ τοῦθ' ὑπεκδραμόντα τοῦ χρόνου τέλος
τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη ζῆν ἀλυπήτῳ βίῳ.
τοιαῦτ' ἔφραζε πρὸς θεῶν εἱμαρμένα
τῶν Ἡρακλείων ἐκτελευτᾶσθαι πόνων, 170
ὡς τὴν παλαιὰν φηγὸν αὐδῆσαί ποτε
Δωδῶνι δισσῶν ἐκ Πελειάδων ἔφη.
καὶ τῶνδε ναμέρτεια συμβαίνει χρόνου
τοῦ νῦν παρόντος, ὡς τελεσθῆναι χρεών·
ὥσθ' ἡδέως εὕδουσαν ἐκπηδᾶν ἐμὲ
φόβῳ, φίλαι, ταρβοῦσαν, εἴ με χρὴ μένειν
πάντων ἀρίστου φωτὸς ἐστερημένην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὐφημίαν νῦν ἴσχ'· ἐπεὶ καταστεφῆ
στείχονθ' ὁρῶ τιν' ἄνδρα πρὸς χαρὰν λόγων.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

δέσποινα Δῃάνειρα, πρῶτος ἀγγέλων 180
ὄκνου σε λύσω· τὸν γὰρ Ἀλκμήνης τόκον
καὶ ζῶντ' ἐπίστω καὶ κρατοῦντα κἀκ μάχης
ἄγοντ' ἀπαρχὰς θεοῖσι τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τίν' εἶπας, ὦ γεραιέ, τόνδε μοι λόγον;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τάχ' ἐς δόμους σοὺς τὸν πολύζηλον πόσιν
ἥξειν φανέντα σὺν κράτει νικηφόρῳ.

And to his children severally assigned
Their heritage of lands; and fixed a date,
Saying that when a year and three full moons
Had passed since he departed from his home,
He needs must die, or, if he then survived,
Live ever after an untroubled life;
So by the mouth of the two priestly Doves[1]
Dodona's sacred oak had once declared.
And now, this very day, the hour has struck
For confirmation of the prophecy.
Thus from sweet slumber, friends, ye see me start
With terror at the thought of widowed days,
If he, the noblest of all men, were gone.

CHORUS

Hush! no ill-omened words! I see approaching
A messenger, bay-wreathed—he brings good news.

Enter MESSENGER.

MESSENGER

Queen Deianira, let me be the first
To rid thee of thy fears. Be well assured
Alcmena's son is living; o'er his foes
Victorious he is bringing home the spoils,
To offer firstfruits to his country's gods.

DEIANIRA

Old man, what dost thou tell me?

MESSENGER

That anon
Thou shalt behold in presence, at thy gate,
Illustrious, crowned with victory, thy lord.

[1] The Peleads were the priestesses of Dodona who interpreted the rustling of the oak or the cooing of the sacred doves and their name in folk etymology was identified with *peleiai*, doves.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ τοῦ τόδ᾽ ἀστῶν ἢ ξένων μαθὼν λέγεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἐν βουθερεῖ λειμῶνι πρὸς πολλοὺς θροεῖ
Λίχας ὁ κῆρυξ ταῦτα· τοῦδ᾽ ἐγὼ κλύων 190
ἀπῇξ᾽, ὅπως τοι πρῶτος ἀγγείλας τάδε
πρὸς σοῦ τι κερδάναιμι καὶ κτῴμην χάριν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

αὐτὸς δὲ πῶς ἄπεστιν, εἴπερ εὐτυχεῖ;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐκ εὐμαρείᾳ χρώμενος πολλῇ, γύναι.
κύκλῳ γὰρ αὐτὸν Μηλιεὺς ἅπας λεὼς
κρίνει παραστάς, οὐδ᾽ ἔχει βῆναι πρόσω·
τὸ γὰρ ποθοῦν ἕκαστος ἐκμαθεῖν[1] θέλων
οὐκ ἂν μεθεῖτο, πρὶν καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν κλύειν.
οὕτως ἐκεῖνος οὐχ ἑκών, ἑκοῦσι δὲ
ξύνεστιν· ὄψει δ᾽ αὐτὸν αὐτίκ᾽ ἐμφανῆ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τὸν Οἴτης ἄτομον ὃς λειμῶν᾽ ἔχεις, 200
ἔδωκας ἡμῖν ἀλλὰ σὺν χρόνῳ χαράν.
φωνήσατ᾽, ὦ γυναῖκες, αἵ τ᾽ εἴσω στέγης
αἵ τ᾽ ἐκτὸς αὐλῆς, ὡς ἄελπτον ὄμμ᾽ ἐμοὶ
φήμης ἀνασχὸν τῆσδε νῦν καρπούμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνολολυξάτω[2] δόμοις ἐφεστίοις
ἀλαλαγαῖς ἁ[3] μελλόνυμφος, ἐν δὲ
κοινὸς ἀρσένων ἴτω
κλαγγὰ τὸν εὐφαρέτραν
Ἀπόλλω προστάταν· ὁμοῦ δὲ

[1] M. L. Carle's ἐκπλῆσαι is the likeliest emendation of a probably corrupt line.
[2] ἀνολολύξατε MSS., Burges corr. [3] ὁ MSS., Erfurdt corr.

DEIANIRA

Some stranger or a native told thee this?

MESSENGER

The herald Lichas is proclaiming it
There in the summer pastures to the crowd.
From him I heard, and sped to be the first
To bring the news and win reward and thanks.

DEIANIRA

If such his news, why comes he not himself?

MESSENGER

That were no light task; all our Malian folk
Cluster around him, hem him on all sides,
Ply him with questions, one and all intent
To hear his news; he cannot stir a step,
Midst willing hosts a most unwilling guest,
Till all their eagerness is satisfied.
But thou shalt see him face to face anon.

DEIANIRA

Lord of the unshorn meads of Oeta, Zeus,
Though long delayed, thou giv'st me joy at last.
Women within, and ye without the gates,
Uplift your voices, hail the new-born light
That dawns to glad me when all hope had fled.

CHORUS

Maidens, let your joyous shout
Of triumph from the hearth ring out,
Swell the quire of men who raise
Their paean to Apollo's praise.
Sing, man and maid,
Phoebus our aid,
Lord of the quiver,
Strong to deliver!

παιᾶνα παιᾶν' ἀνάγετ', ὦ παρθένοι, 210
βοᾶτε τὰν ὁμόσπορον
Ἄρτεμιν Ὀρτυγίαν
ἐλαφαβόλον ἀμφίπυρον,
γείτονάς τε Νύμφας.
ἀείρομαι οὐδ' ἀπώσομαι
τὸν αὐλόν, ὦ τύραννε τᾶς ἐμᾶς φρενός.
ἰδού μ' ἀναταράσσει,
εὐοῖ μ',
ὁ κισσὸς ἄρτι βακχίαν
ὑποστρέφων ἅμιλλαν. ἰὼ ἰὼ Παιάν. 220
ἴδ', ὦ φίλα γύναι,
τάδ' ἀντίπρῳρα δή σοι
βλέπειν πάρεστ' ἐναργῆ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὁρῶ, φίλαι γυναῖκες, οὐδέ μ' ὄμματος
φρουρὰν παρῆλθε, τόνδε μὴ λεύσσειν στόλον·
χαίρειν δὲ τὸν κήρυκα προυννέπω, χρόνῳ
πολλῷ φανέντα, χαρτὸν εἴ τι καὶ φέρεις.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ' εὖ μὲν ἵγμεθ', εὖ δὲ προσφωνούμεθα,
γύναι, κατ' ἔργου κτῆσιν· ἄνδρα γὰρ καλῶς 230
πράσσοντ' ἀνάγκη χρηστὰ κερδαίνειν ἔπη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν, πρῶθ' ἃ πρῶτα βούλομαι
δίδαξον, εἰ ζῶνθ' Ἡρακλῆ προσδέξομαι.

Hymn his sister, maid and man,
Artemis Ortygian.
    Slayer of deer,
    With fiery brand
    In either hand,
    O goddess, hear!
Hymn ye the nymphs too, her attendant band.
My spirit spurns the ground;
Bid the shrill fife outsound,
My sovereign I obey.
    Evoë!
    The thyrsus, see,
Calls me; I must away
To join the Bacchic rout,
With Maenads dance and shout,
Once more the paean raise;
    For, lady, here,
    In presence clear,
My joy takes shape and stands before thy gaze.

DEIANIRA

Kind friends, I see, nor have my wistful eyes
Failed to perceive this company's approach—
Hail to thee, herald, if indeed thou bring'st
News that will gladden me, though long delayed.

Enter LICHAS *with* CAPTIVE WOMEN.

LICHAS

Yea, lady, glad is our return and glad
Thy greeting, as befits the deed achieved.
He who speeds well a welcome fair deserves.

DEIANIRA

First tell me what I first would learn, best friend,
Shall I embrace my Heracles alive?

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἔγωγέ τοι σφ' ἔλειπον ἰσχύοντά τε
καὶ ζῶντα καὶ θάλλοντα κοὐ νόσῳ βαρύν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ γῆς; πατρῴας εἴτε βαρβάρου; λέγε.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀκτή τις ἔστ' Εὐβοιίς, ἔνθ' ὁρίζεται
βωμοὺς τέλη τ' ἔγκαρπα Κηναίῳ Διί.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

εὐκταῖα φαίνων ἢ 'πὸ μαντείας τινός;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

εὐχαῖς ὅθ' ᾕρει τῶνδ' ἀνάστατον δορὶ　　240
χώραν γυναικῶν ὧν ὁρᾷς ἐν ὄμμασιν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

αὗται δέ, πρὸς θεῶν, τοῦ ποτ' εἰσὶ καὶ τίνες;
οἰκτραὶ γάρ, εἰ μὴ ξυμφοραὶ κλέπτουσί με.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ταύτας ἐκεῖνος Εὐρύτου πέρσας πόλιν
ἐξείλεθ' αὑτῷ κτῆμα καὶ θεοῖς κριτόν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἦ κἀπὶ ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει τὸν ἄσκοπον
χρόνον βεβὼς ἦν ἡμερῶν ἀνήριθμον;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ τὸν μὲν πλεῖστον ἐν Λυδοῖς χρόνον
κατείχεθ', ὥς φησ' αὐτός, οὐκ ἐλεύθερος,
ἀλλ' ἐμπποληθείς· τοῦ λόγου δ' οὐ χρὴ φθόνον,　　250
γύναι, προσεῖναι, Ζεὺς ὅτου πράκτωρ φανῇ.
κεῖνος δὲ πραθεὶς Ὀμφάλῃ τῇ βαρβάρῳ
ἐνιαυτὸν ἐξέπλησεν, ὡς αὐτὸς λέγει.

LICHAS

Surely; I left him both alive and hale,
In lusty strength and sound in every limb.

DEIANIRA

Where? upon Greek soil, tell me, or abroad?

LICHAS

Upon a headland in Euboea, where
He marks out altars to Cenaean Zeus,
And dedicates the fertile lands around.

DEIANIRA

In payment of some former vow, or warned
By oracles?

LICHAS

'Tis for a vow he made
When he went forth to conquer and despoil
Oechalia of these women whom thou see'st.

DEIANIRA

O tell me who these captives are and whose;
So piteous, to judge them by their plight.

LICHAS

He chose them for himself and for the gods,
When he had sacked the town of Eurytus.

DEIANIRA

Was it to take that city he delayed
All those interminable, countless days?

LICHAS

Not so; that time he mostly was detained
In Lydia; by his own account, not free,
But sold in bondage; nor shouldst thou resent
A tale of outrage, when the doer is Zeus.
Thus he fulfilled (these were his very words)
A year of servitude to Omphalè,
The barbarous queen. So grievous was the sting

χοὕτως ἐδήχθη τοῦτο τοὔνειδος λαβὼν
ὥσθ' ὅρκον αὑτῷ προσβαλὼν διώμοσεν,
ἦ μὴν τὸν ἀγχιστῆρα τοῦδε τοῦ πάθους
ξὺν παιδὶ καὶ γυναικὶ δουλώσειν ἔτι.
κοὐχ ἡλίωσε τοὔπος, ἀλλ' ὅθ' ἁγνὸς ἦν,
στρατὸν λαβὼν ἐπακτὸν ἔρχεται πόλιν
τὴν Εὐρυτείαν. τόνδε γὰρ μεταίτιον 260
μόνον βροτῶν ἔφασκε τοῦδ' εἶναι πάθους·
ὃς αὐτὸν ἐλθόντ' ἐς δόμους ἐφέστιον,
ξένον παλαιὸν ὄντα, πολλὰ μὲν λόγοις
ἐπερρόθησε, πολλὰ δ' ἀτηρᾷ φρενί,
λέγων χεροῖν μὲν ὡς ἄφυκτ' ἔχων βέλη
τῶν ὧν τέκνων λείποιτο πρὸς τόξου κρίσιν,
φωνεῖ δὲ δοῦλος ἀνδρὸς ὡς ἐλευθέρου
ῥαίοιτο· δείπνοις δ' ἡνίκ' ἦν ᾠνωμένος,
ἔρριψεν ἐκτὸς αὐτόν. ὧν ἔχων χόλον,
ὡς ἵκετ' αὖθις Ἴφιτος Τιρυνθίαν 270
πρὸς κλιτύν, ἵππους νομάδας ἐξιχνοσκοπῶν,
τότ' ἄλλοσ' αὐτὸν ὄμμα, θατέρᾳ δὲ νοῦν
ἔχοντ', ἀπ' ἄκρας ἧκε πυργώδους πλακός.
ἔργου δ' ἕκατι τοῦδε μηνίσας ἄναξ
ὁ τῶν ἁπάντων Ζεὺς πατὴρ Ὀλύμπιος
πρατόν νιν ἐξέπεμψεν οὐδ' ἠνέσχετο,
ὁθούνεκ' αὐτὸν μοῦνον ἀνθρώπων δόλῳ
ἔκτεινεν· εἰ γὰρ ἐμφανῶς ἠμύνατο,
Ζεύς τἂν συνέγνω ξὺν δίκῃ χειρουμένῳ·
ὕβριν γὰρ οὐ στέργουσιν οὐδὲ δαίμονες. 280
κεῖνοι δ' ὑπερχλίοντες ἐκ γλώσσης κακῆς
αὐτοὶ μὲν Ἅιδου πάντες εἴσ' οἰκήτορες,
πόλις δὲ δούλη· τάσδε δ' ἅσπερ εἰσορᾷς
ἐξ ὀλβίων ἄζηλον εὑροῦσαι βίον
χωροῦσι πρὸς σέ· ταῦτα γὰρ πόσις τε σὸς

Of his reproach, that by a mighty oath
He swore one day to enslave with wife and child
The author of this foul calamity.
Nor vain that vow. No sooner was he purged,
Than he enlisted straight an alien host,
And marched against the city of Eurytus;
For Eurytus alone of men he deemed
The guilty cause, who when he came a guest
To one by ties of ancient friendship bound,
With many a bitter taunt and bitter spite
Assailed him, saying, "Thou indeed hast shafts
Unerring, yet in feats of archery
My sons surpass thee," or again he'd cry,
"Out on thee, slave, a freeman's down-trod thrall."
Once at a banquet too he cast him forth
When he was in his cups. Whereat incensed,
Encountering Iphitus upon the hill
Of Tiryns in pursuit of his strayed mares,
As the youth stood at gaze, his wits afield,
He hurled him from the craggy battlements.
That deed of violence provoked our King,
The sire of all, Olympian Zeus, who drave him
Forth to be sold, and spared him not, because
That once (his sole offence) he slew a foe
By treachery; had he slain him in fair fight,
Zeus had approved his righteous wrath, for gods
No more than men can suffer insolence.
So all those braggarts of outrageous tongue
Lie low in Hades and their town's enslaved,
And these, the women whom thou seeest, fallen
To abject misery from their high estate,
Are to thy hands delivered. Thus my lord

ἐφεῖτ', ἐγὼ δὲ πιστὸς ὢν κείνῳ τελῶ.
αὐτὸν δ' ἐκεῖνον, εὖτ' ἂν ἁγνὰ θύματα
ῥέξῃ πατρῴῳ Ζηνὶ τῆς ἁλώσεως,
φρόνει νιν ὡς ἥξοντα· τοῦτο γὰρ λόγου
πολλοῦ καλῶς λεχθέντος ἥδιστον κλύειν. 290

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἄνασσα, νῦν σοι τέρψις ἐμφανὴς κυρεῖ,
τῶν μὲν παρόντων, τὰ δὲ πεπυσμένῃ λόγῳ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἐγὼ χαίροιμ' ἄν, ἀνδρὸς εὐτυχῆ
κλύουσα πρᾶξιν τήνδε, πανδίκῳ φρενί;
πολλή 'στ' ἀνάγκη τῇδε τοῦτο συντρέχειν.
ὅμως δ' ἔνεστι τοῖσιν εὖ σκοπουμένοις
ταρβεῖν τὸν εὖ πράσσοντα, μὴ σφαλῇ ποτε.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ οἶκτος δεινὸς εἰσέβη, φίλαι,
ταύτας ὁρώσῃ δυσπότμους ἐπὶ ξένης
χώρας ἀοίκους ἀπάτοράς τ' ἀλωμένας, 300
αἳ πρὶν μὲν ἦσαν ἐξ ἐλευθέρων ἴσως
ἀνδρῶν, τανῦν δὲ δοῦλον ἴσχουσιν βίον.
ὦ Ζεῦ τροπαῖε, μή ποτ' εἰσίδοιμί σε
πρὸς τοὐμὸν οὕτω σπέρμα χωρήσαντά ποι,
μηδ', εἴ τι δράσεις, τῆσδέ γε ζώσης ἔτι.
οὕτως ἐγὼ δέδοικα τάσδ' ὁρωμένη.
ὦ δυστάλαινα, τίς ποτ' εἶ νεανίδων;
ἄνανδρος ἢ τεκνοῦσσα[1]; πρὸς μὲν γὰρ φύσιν
πάντων ἄπειρος τῶνδε, γενναία δέ τις.
Λίχα, τίνος ποτ' ἐστὶν ἡ ξένη βροτῶν;
τίς ἡ τεκοῦσα, τίς δ' ὁ φιτύσας πατήρ;
ἔξειπ'· ἐπεί νιν τῶνδε πλεῖστον ᾤκτισα
βλέπουσ', ὅσῳπερ καὶ φρονεῖν οἶδεν μόνη. 310

[1] τεκοῦσα MSS., Brunck corr.

Charged me, and I, his liegeman true, obey.
Doubt not himself, so soon as he has paid
Due sacrifices for his victory
To Zeus his sire, will presently be here.
This crowns and consummates my happy tale.

CHORUS

Now, lady, is thy joy assured, in part
Present, with promise sure for what remains.

DEIANIRA

Hearing these happy tidings of my lord
How can I but rejoice, as it is meet,
For our two fortunes run in parallels.
Yet one who thinks on change and chance must dread
Lest such success be prelude to a fall.
And a strange pity hath come o'er me, friends,
At sight of these poor wretches, motherless,
Fatherless, homeless, in an alien land,
Daughters, it well may be, of free-born sires,
And now condemned to live the life of slaves.
Never, O Zeus who turn'st the tide of war,
Never may I behold a child of mine
Thus visited, or if such lot must be,
May it not fall while Deianira lives.
Such dread, as I behold these maids, is mine.

(*To* IOLÈ)

Say, who art thou, most miserable girl,
Mother or maid? To judge thee by thy looks
Thou hast full warrant of virginity,
Yea and of high birth. Lichas, who is she?
Who was her father, and her mother? Speak.
Her most of all I pity, for she shows
Alone the sense of her calamity.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

τί δ' οἶδ' ἐγώ, τί δ' ἄν με καὶ κρίνοις; ἴσως
γέννημα τῶν ἐκεῖθεν οὐκ ἐν ὑστάτοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μὴ τῶν τυράννων; Εὐρύτου σπορά τις ἦν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

οὐκ οἶδα· καὶ γὰρ οὐδ' ἀνιστόρουν μακράν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐδ' ὄνομα πρός του τῶν ξυνεμπόρων ἔχεις;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἥκιστα· σιγῇ τοὐμὸν ἔργον ἤνυτον.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

εἴπ', ὦ τάλαιν', ἀλλ' ἡμὶν ἐκ σαυτῆς, ἐπεὶ 320
καὶ ξυμφορά τοι μὴ εἰδέναι σέ γ' ἥτις εἶ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

οὔ τἄρα τῷ γε πρόσθεν οὐδὲν ἐξ ἴσου
χρόνῳ διήσει[1] γλῶσσαν, ἥτις οὐδαμὰ
προὔφηνεν οὔτε μείζον' οὔτ' ἐλάσσονα,
ἀλλ' αἰὲν ὠδίνουσα συμφορᾶς βάρος
δακρυρροεῖ δύστηνος, ἐξ ὅτου πάτραν
διήνεμον λέλοιπεν· ἡ δέ τοι τύχη
κακὴ μὲν αὐτῇ γ', ἀλλὰ συγγνώμην ἔχει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἡ δ' οὖν ἐάσθω, καὶ πορευέσθω στέγας
οὕτως ὅπως ἥδιστα, μηδὲ πρὸς κακοῖς 330
τοῖς οὖσιν ἄλλην[2] πρός γ' ἐμοῦ λύπην λάβῃ·[3]
ἅλις γὰρ ἡ παροῦσα. πρὸς δὲ δώματα
χωρῶμεν ἤδη πάντες, ὡς σύ θ' οἷ θέλεις
σπεύδῃς, ἐγώ τε τἄνδον ἐξαρκῆ τιθῶ.

[1] διοίσει MSS., Wakefield corr.
[2] οὖσι λύπην MSS., F. W. Schmidt corr.
[3] λάβοι MSS., Blaydes corr.

LICHAS

How should I know? Why question me? Perchance
She was of noblest lineage in that land.

DEIANIRA

What, of their kings? Had Eurytus a daughter?

LICHAS

I know not, did not question her at length.

DEIANIRA

Did'st thou not even learn her name from one
Of her companions?

LICHAS

No, I had my work
To do, and had no time for questioning.

DEIANIRA

Then speak to *me* and tell me who thou art,
Poor maid; it grieves me truly not to know.

LICHAS

Well, if she opens now her lips, 'twill be
Unlike her former self, for hitherto
She hath not uttered word or syllable;
But still in travail with her heavy grief
She weeps and stays not weeping since she left
Her wind-swept home. 'Tis sad and ill for her,
This melancholy, yet 'tis natural.

DEIANIRA

Leave her in peace and let her pass within,
As is her humour. Heaven forbid that I
Should add another to her present pains,
Enough God knows. Now let us all go in,
That thou may'st start at once upon thy way.
And I make all things ready in the house.

[*Exeunt* LICHAS *and* CAPTIVES.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

αὐτοῦ γε πρῶτον βαιὸν ἀμμείνασ', ὅπως
μάθῃς ἄνευ τῶνδ', οὕστινάς τ' ἄγεις ἔσω,
ὧν τ' οὐδὲν εἰσήκουσας ἐκμάθῃς ἃ δεῖ·
τούτων ἔχω γὰρ πάντ' ἐπιστήμην ἐγώ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δ' ἐστί; τοῦ με τήνδ' ἐφίστασαι βάσιν;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

σταθεῖσ' ἄκουσον· καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲ τὸν πάρος   340
μῦθον μάτην ἤκουσας, οὐδὲ νῦν δοκῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πότερον ἐκείνους δῆτα δεῦρ' αὖθις πάλιν
καλῶμεν, ἢ 'μοὶ ταῖσδέ τ' ἐξειπεῖν θέλεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

σοὶ ταῖσδέ τ' οὐδὲν εἴργεται, τούτους δ' ἔα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

καὶ δὴ βεβᾶσι, χὠ λόγος σημαινέτω.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἁνὴρ ὅδ' οὐδὲν ὧν ἔλεξεν ἀρτίως
φωνεῖ δίκης ἐς ὀρθόν, ἀλλ' ἢ νῦν κακὸς
ἢ πρόσθεν οὐ δίκαιος ἄγγελος παρῆν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί φής; σαφῶς μοι φράζε πᾶν ὅσον νοεῖς·
ἃ μὲν γὰρ ἐξείρηκας ἀγνοία μ' ἔχει.   350

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τούτου λέγοντος τἀνδρὸς εἰσήκουσ' ἐγώ,
πολλῶν παρόντων μαρτύρων, ὡς τῆς κόρης
ταύτης ἕκατι κεῖνος Εὔρυτόν θ' ἕλοι
τήν θ' ὑψίπυργον Οἰχαλίαν, Ἔρως δέ νιν
μόνος θεῶν θέλξειεν αἰχμάσαι τάδε,

MESSENGER

So be it, but first tarry here awhile
That thou may'st learn in private who are these
Whom thou dost welcome 'neath thy roof, and hear
Matters of import still untold, whereof
I have full cognisance.

DEIANIRA

What meanest thou?
Why dost thou bid me pause and stay my steps?

MESSENGER

Attend and listen. As my former news
Was worth the hearing, so methinks is this.

DEIANIRA

Say, shall I call the others back to hear,
Or wouldst thou speak with me and these alone?

MESSENGER

With thee and these; the rest are well away.

DEIANIRA

See, they are gone; proceed then with thy tale.

MESSENGER

Yon fellow spake not the straightforward truth
In aught he told thee; either now he's false,
Or else before was no true messenger.

DEIANIRA

How say'st thou? Tell me clearly all thy mind.
These covert hints I cannot understand.

MESSENGER

'Twas for this maiden's sake (I heard the man,
And many witnesses were by, declare it)
That Heracles laid prostrate in the dust
Oechalia's battlements and Eurytus.
Love was his leader, love alone inspired
This doughty deed, not his base servitude

οὐ τἀπὶ Λυδοῖς οὐδ' ὑπ' Ὀμφάλῃ πόνων
λατρεύματ' οὐδ' ὁ ῥιπτὸς Ἰφίτου μόρος·
ὃν νῦν παρώσας οὗτος ἔμπαλιν λέγει.
ἀλλ' ἡνίκ' οὐκ ἔπειθε τὸν φυτοσπόρον
τὴν παῖδα δοῦναι, κρύφιον ὡς ἔχοι λέχος, 360
ἔγκλημα μικρὸν αἰτίαν θ' ἑτοιμάσας
ἐπιστρατεύει πατρίδα τὴν ταύτης, ἐν ᾗ
τὸν Εὔρυτον τόνδ' εἶπε δεσπόζειν θρόνων,
κτείνει τ' ἄνακτα πατέρα τῆσδε καὶ πόλιν
ἔπερσε. καὶ νῦν, ὡς ὁρᾷς, ἥκει δόμους
ὡς τούσδε πέμπων οὐκ ἀφροντίστως, γύναι,
οὐδ' ὥστε δούλην· μηδὲ προσδόκα τόδε·
οὐδ' εἰκός, εἴπερ ἐντεθέρμανται πόθῳ.
ἔδοξεν οὖν μοι πρὸς σὲ δηλῶσαι τὸ πᾶν,
δέσποιν', ὃ τοῦδε τυγχάνω μαθὼν πάρα. 370
καὶ ταῦτα πολλοὶ πρὸς μέσῃ Τραχινίων
ἀγορᾷ συνεξήκουον ὡσαύτως ἐμοί,
ὥστ' ἐξελέγχειν· εἰ δὲ μὴ λέγω φίλα,
οὐχ ἥδομαι, τὸ δ' ὀρθὸν ἐξείρηχ' ὅμως.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οἴμοι τάλαινα, ποῦ ποτ' εἰμὶ πράγματος;
τίν' εἰσδέδεγμαι πημονὴν ὑπόστεγον
λαθραῖον; ὦ δύστηνος· ἆρ' ἀνώνυμος
πέφυκεν, ὥσπερ οὑπάγων διώμνυτο;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἦ κάρτα λαμπρὰ καὶ κατ' ὄνομα καὶ φύσιν,
πατρὸς μὲν οὖσα γένεσιν Εὐρύτου ποτὲ 380
Ἰόλη 'καλεῖτο, τῆς ἐκεῖνος οὐδαμὰ
βλάστας ἐφώνει, δῆθεν οὐδὲν ἱστορῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὄλοιντο — μή τι πάντες οἱ κακοί, τὰ δὲ
λαθραῖ' ὃς ἀσκεῖ μὴ πρέποντ' αὐτῷ κακά.

As bondsman under Lydian Omphalè,
Nor ruth for Iphitus hurled headlong down,
As Lichas feigned, who shrank to tell of love.
So, when he failed to win her sire's consent
To give the maiden for his paramour,
Picking some petty cause of quarrel, he
Made war upon her land (the land in which
Eurytus, as the herald said, was King)
And slew the prince her sire and sacked the town.
Now, as thou see'st, he comes and sends before him
The maiden, with set purpose, to his house;
Not as a slave—how could he so intend,
Seeing his heart is kindled with love's fire?
So I determined, Queen, to tell thee all
I had heard from Lichas; many heard it too
Who stood with me in the Trachinean mote,
And can convict him. If my words give pain,
It grieves me, but, alas, they are too true.

DEIANIRA

Ah me unhappy! in what plight I stand!
What bane have I received beneath my roof,
Unwitting, for my ruin! Is she then
A nameless maid, as he who brought her sware?

MESSENGER

Nay, she hath name and fame, a princess born,
Iolè, daughter of King Eurytus;
This girl whose parents Lichas could not tell,
Because, forsooth, he had not questioned her.

CHORUS

A curse on evil doers, most on him
Who by deceit worketh iniquity!

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί χρὴ ποεῖν, γυναῖκες; ὡς ἐγὼ λόγοις
τοῖς νῦν παροῦσιν ἐκπεπληγμένη κυρῶ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πεύθου μολοῦσα τἀνδρός, ὡς τάχ' ἂν σαφῆ
λέξειεν, εἴ νιν πρὸς βίαν κρίνειν θέλοις.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' εἶμι· καὶ γὰρ οὐκ ἀπὸ γνώμης λέγεις.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ἡμεῖς δὲ προσμένωμεν; ἢ τί χρὴ ποεῖν; 390

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μίμν', ὡς ὅδ' ἀνὴρ οὐκ ἐμῶν ὑπ' ἀγγέλων,
ἀλλ' αὐτόκλητος ἐκ δόμων πορεύεται.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

τί χρή, γύναι, μολόντα μ' Ἡρακλεῖ λέγειν;
δίδαξον, ὡς ἕρποντος, ὡς ὁρᾷς,[1] ἐμοῦ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ὡς ἐκ ταχείας σὺν χρόνῳ βραδεῖ μολὼν
ᾄσσεις, πρὶν ἡμᾶς κἀννεώσασθαι λόγους.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ' εἴ τι χρῄζεις ἱστορεῖν, πάρειμ' ἐγώ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἦ καὶ τὸ πιστὸν τῆς ἀληθείας νέμεις;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἴστω μέγας Ζεύς, ὧν γ' ἂν ἐξειδὼς κυρῶ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τίς ἡ γυνὴ δῆτ' ἐστὶν ἣν ἥκεις ἄγων; 400

ΛΙΧΑΣ

Εὐβοιίς· ὧν δ' ἔβλαστεν οὐκ ἔχω λέγειν.

[1] εἰσορᾷς MSS., Wakefield corr

DEIANIRA

My friends, what shall I do? this latest news
Bewilders me.

MESSENGER

Go in and question Lichas;
Perchance, if pressed, he'll tell thee all the truth.

DEIANIRA

There's reason in thy counsel; I will go.

MESSENGER

And I—shall I remain, or what would'st thou
That I should do?

DEIANIRA

Remain, for here he comes
Without my summons, of his own accord.

Re-enter LICHAS.

LICHAS

Lady, what message shall I bear my lord?
Instruct me; I am starting, as thou see'st.

DEIANIRA

Thou cam'st at leisure, but dost part in haste,
And hast no time for further talk with me.

LICHAS

If thou wouldst question me, I wait thy pleasure.

DEIANIRA

Say, dost thou reverence the honest truth?

LICHAS

So help me Zeus, I'll speak what truth I know.

DEIANIRA

Who is this woman then whom thou hast brought?

LICHAS

Euboean; of her parents I know naught.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὗτος, βλέφ' ὧδε· πρὸς τίν' ἐννέπειν δοκεῖς;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

σὺ δ' εἰς τί δή με τοῦτ' ἐρωτήσας ἔχεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τόλμησον εἰπεῖν, εἰ φρονεῖς, ὅ σ' ἱστορῶ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

πρὸς τὴν κρατοῦσαν Δῃάνειραν, Οἰνέως
κόρην δάμαρτά θ' Ἡρακλέους, εἰ μὴ κυρῶ
λεύσσων μάταια, δεσπότιν τε τὴν ἐμήν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τοῦτ' αὔτ' ἔχρῃζον, τοῦτό σου μαθεῖν· λέγεις
δέσποιναν εἶναι τήνδε σήν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

δίκαια γάρ.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τί δῆτα; ποίαν ἀξιοῖς δοῦναι δίκην, 410
ἢν εὑρεθῇς ἐς τήνδε μὴ δίκαιος ὤν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

πῶς μὴ δίκαιος; τί ποτε ποικίλας ἔχεις;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὐδέν· σὺ μέντοι κάρτα τοῦτο δρῶν κυρεῖς.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἄπειμι· μῶρος δ' ἦ πάλαι κλύων σέθεν.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὔ, πρίν γ' ἂν εἴπῃς ἱστορούμενος βραχύ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

λέγ', εἴ τι χρῄζεις· καὶ γὰρ οὐ σιγηλὸς εἶ.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

τὴν αἰχμάλωτον, ἣν ἔπεμψας ἐς δόμους,
κάτοισθα δήπου;

MESSENGER

Hark, sirrah, look me in the face: dost know
To whom thou speakest?

LICHAS

Who art thou to ask me?

MESSENGER

Be pleased to answer, if thou hast the wit.

LICHAS

To my most gracious mistress whom I serve,
Daughter of Oeneus, spouse of Heracles,
Deianira, if I be not blind.

MESSENGER

My question's answered to the point. Thou sayest
She is thy sovereign.

LICHAS

Whom I am bound to serve.

MESSENGER

Then tell me what should be thy punishment,
If in thy duty thou art proved to fail.

LICHAS

Fail in my duty? What dark riddle is this?

MESSENGER

My words are plain, the riddling speech is thine.

LICHAS

I go; I was a fool to stay for thee.

MESSENGER

Depart, but answer one brief question first.

LICHAS

Ask what thou wilt; thou hast a wagging tongue.

MESSENGER

That captive whom thou broughtest here—thou know'st
The maid I mean?

ΛΙΧΑΣ

φημί· πρὸς τί δ' ἱστορεῖς;

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

οὔκουν σὺ ταύτην, ἣν ὑπ' ἀγνοίας ὁρᾷς,
Ἰόλην ἔφασκες Εὐρύτου σπορὰν ἄγειν; 420

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ποίοις ἐν ἀνθρώποισι; τίς πόθεν μολὼν
σοὶ μαρτυρήσει ταῦτ' ἐμοῦ κλύειν πάρα;[1]

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

πολλοῖσιν ἀστῶν· ἐν μέσῃ Τραχινίων
ἀγορᾷ πολύς σου ταῦτά γ' εἰσήκουσ' ὄχλος.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

κλύειν γ' ἔφασκον· ταὐτὸ δ' οὐχὶ γίγνεται
δόκησιν εἰπεῖν κἀξακριβῶσαι λόγον.

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ποίαν δόκησιν; οὐκ ἐπώμοτος λέγων
δάμαρτ' ἔφασκες Ἡρακλεῖ ταύτην ἄγειν;

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἐγὼ δάμαρτα; πρὸς θεῶν, φράσον, φίλη
δέσποινα, τόνδε τίς ποτ' ἐστὶν ὁ ξένος. 430

ΑΓΓΕΛΟΣ

ὃς σοῦ παρὼν ἤκουσεν, ὡς ταύτης πόθῳ
πόλις δαμείη πᾶσα, κοὐχ ἡ Λυδία
πέρσειεν αὐτήν, ἀλλ' ὁ τῆσδ' ἔρως φανείς.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἅνθρωπος, ὦ δέσποιν', ἀποστήτω· τὸ γὰρ
νοσοῦντι ληρεῖν ἀνδρὸς οὐχὶ σώφρονος.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μή, πρός σε τοῦ κατ' ἄκρον Οἰταῖον νάπος
Διὸς καταστράπτοντος, ἐκκλέψῃς λόγον.

[1] παρών MSS., Bothe corr.

LICHAS

I know, and what of her?

MESSENGER

Said'st thou not she thou scarce dost know by sight
Was Iolè, the child of Eurytus?

LICHAS

To whom and when? What witness canst thou bring
To vouch for hearing such a tale from me?

MESSENGER

Scores of our townsfolk—all the multitude
That heard thee at the great Trachinean mote.

LICHAS

They may have said so, but the vulgar bruit
Of mere surmise is not strict evidence.

MESSENGER

'Surmise,' quotha! Did'st thou not say on oath,
'I am bringing home a bride for Heracles'?

LICHAS

'Bringing a bride?' Dear lady, tell me, pray,
Who is this stranger?

MESSENGER

One who heard thy tale
How a whole city fell for love of her,
That 'twas the passion kindled by her eyes,
And not the Lydian queen who sacked the town.

LICHAS

Send him away, good lady; 'tis not wise
To bandy folly with a brain-sick fool.

DEIANIRA

Nay, by the god, I pray, who hurls his bolts
On Oeta's wooded heights, hold nothing back;

οὐ γὰρ γυναικὶ τοὺς λόγους ἐρεῖς κακῇ
οὐδ' ἥτις οὐ κάτοιδε τἀνθρώπων, ὅτι
χαίρειν πέφυκεν οὐχὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἀεί. 440
Ἔρωτι μέν νυν ὅστις ἀντανίσταται
πύκτης ὅπως ἐς χεῖρας, οὐ καλῶς φρονεῖ·
οὗτος γὰρ ἄρχει καὶ θεῶν ὅπως θέλει,
κἀμοῦ γε· πῶς δ' οὐ χἀτέρας οἵας γ' ἐμοῦ;
ὥστ' εἴ τι τὠμῷ τ' ἀνδρὶ τῇδε τῇ νόσῳ
ληφθέντι μεμπτός εἰμι, κάρτα μαίνομαι,
ἢ τῇδε τῇ γυναικὶ τῇ μεταιτίᾳ
τοῦ μηδὲν αἰσχροῦ μηδ' ἐμοὶ κακοῦ τινος.
οὐκ ἔστι ταῦτ'· ἀλλ' εἰ μὲν ἐκ κείνου μαθὼν
ψεύδει, μάθησιν οὐ καλὴν ἐκμανθάνεις. 450
εἰ δ' αὐτὸς αὑτὸν ὧδε παιδεύεις, ὅταν
θέλῃς γενέσθαι χρηστός, ὀφθήσει κακός.
ἀλλ' εἰπὲ πᾶν τἀληθές· ὡς ἐλευθέρῳ
ψευδεῖ καλεῖσθαι κὴρ πρόσεστιν οὐ καλή.
ὅπως δὲ λήσεις, οὐδὲ τοῦτο γίγνεται·
πολλοὶ γὰρ οἷς εἴρηκας, οἳ φράσουσ' ἐμοί.
κεἰ μὲν δέδοικας, οὐ καλῶς ταρβεῖς, ἐπεὶ
τὸ μὴ πυθέσθαι, τοῦτό μ' ἀλγύνειεν ἄν·
τὸ δ' εἰδέναι τί δεινόν; οὐχὶ χἀτέρας
πλείστας ἀνὴρ εἷς Ἡρακλῆς ἔγημε δή; 460
κοὔπω τις αὐτῶν ἔκ γ' ἐμοῦ λόγον κακὸν
ἠνέγκατ' οὐδ' ὄνειδος· ἥδε τ' οὐδ' ἂν εἰ
κάρτ' ἐντακείη τῷ φιλεῖν, ἐπεί σφ' ἐγὼ
ᾤκτιρα δὴ μάλιστα προσβλέψασ', ὅτι
τὸ κάλλος αὐτῆς τὸν βίον διώλεσεν,
καὶ γῆν πατρῴαν οὐχ ἑκοῦσα δύσμορος
ἔπερσε κἀδούλωσεν. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν
ῥείτω κατ' οὖρον· σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ φράζω κακὸν
πρὸς ἄλλον εἶναι, πρὸς δ' ἔμ' ἀψευδεῖν ἀεί.

To no ungenerous woman wilt thou speak,
But one that knows the inconstancy of men,
Who e'en in joys delight not in one kind.
The gamester who would pit himself 'gainst Love
Is ill advised. Love rules at will the gods,
And me—why not then others weak as I?
So were I mad indeed either to blame
My husband stricken with love's malady,
Or her the partner of his dalliance:
That brings to them no shame or wrong to me.
I have more sense. But if he taught thee thus
To lie, the lesson thou hast learnt is base;
Or if thy fraud is self-taught, thou art like
To prove most cruel, meaning to be kind.
Nay, tell me the whole truth. The name of liar
Is to the free-born man a deadly brand.
And think not that thy lying will not out,
For many heard thy tale and will inform me.
Art thou afraid of me? Thy fears are vain.
'Twould vex me much not to be told the truth;
To know it hurts not. Hath not Heracles
Had loves before (no mortal more than he)
And no one of them ever had harsh word
Or taunt from me; nor shall this maid, howe'er
She dotes, consumed with passion, on my lord.
Nay, my heart bled for pity seeing her
Whose beauty was her bane; poor innocent,
Who brought to wrack and bondage her own land.
All that is past and over, let it sail
Adown the stream of time. But O, be thou,
Whate'er thou art to others, true to me.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πείθου λεγούσῃ χρηστά, κοὐ μέμψει χρόνῳ 470
γυναικὶ τῇδε κἀπ' ἐμοῦ κτήσει χάριν.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ φίλη δέσποιν', ἐπεί σε μανθάνω
θνητὴν φρονοῦσαν θνητὰ κοὐκ ἀγνώμονα,
πᾶν σοι φράσω τἀληθὲς οὐδὲ κρύψομαι.
ἔστιν γὰρ οὕτως ὥσπερ οὗτος ἐννέπει.
ταύτης ὁ δεινὸς ἵμερός ποθ' Ἡρακλῆ
διῆλθε, καὶ τῆσδ' εἵνεχ' ἡ πολύφθορος
καθῃρέθη πατρῷος Οἰχαλία δόρει.
καὶ ταῦτα, δεῖ γὰρ καὶ τὸ πρὸς κείνου λέγειν,
οὔτ' εἶπε κρύπτειν οὔτ' ἀπηρνήθη ποτέ, 480
ἀλλ' αὐτός, ὦ δέσποινα, δειμαίνων τὸ σὸν
μὴ στέρνον ἀλγύνοιμι τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις,
ἥμαρτον, εἴ τι τήνδ' ἁμαρτίαν νέμεις.
ἐπεί γε μὲν δὴ πάντ' ἐπίστασαι λόγον,
κείνου τε καὶ σὴν ἐξ ἴσου κοινὴν χάριν
καὶ στέργε τὴν γυναῖκα καὶ βούλου λόγους,
οὓς εἶπας ἐς τήνδ', ἐμπέδως εἰρηκέναι·
ὡς τἄλλ' ἐκεῖνος πάντ' ἀριστεύων χεροῖν
τοῦ τῆσδ' ἔρωτος εἰς ἅπανθ' ἥσσων ἔφυ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' ὧδε καὶ φρονοῦμεν ὥστε ταῦτα δρᾶν, 490
κοὔτοι νόσον γ' ἐπακτὸν ἐξαρούμεθα,
θεοῖσι δυσμαχοῦντες. ἀλλ' εἴσω στέγης
χωρῶμεν, ὡς λόγων τ' ἐπιστολὰς φέρῃς,
ἅ τ' ἀντὶ δώρων δῶρα χρὴ προσαρμόσαι,
καὶ ταῦτ' ἄγῃς· κενὸν γὰρ οὐ δίκαιά σε
χωρεῖν προσελθόνθ' ὧδε σὺν πολλῷ στόλῳ.

CHORUS

Heed her, she counsels well, and thou shalt win
Her commendation soon, and thanks from me.

LICHAS

Nay, then, dear mistress, since I see thou hast
A human feeling for the infirmities
Of poor humanity, I will tell thee all
Frankly and fully. 'Tis as this man saith;
The overmastering passion that inspired
The soul of Heracles was for this maid,
And for her sake he sacked Oechalia,
Her desolate home. This much in his defence
I needs must add, he ne'er himself denied
Nor bade me hide it from thee. It was I,
Fearing to wound thee, lady, I who sinned,
If such concealment should be deemed a sin.
Now, lady, that thou know'st the tale in full,
For both your sakes—thine own no less than his—
Suffer this maiden gladly, and abide
By the kind words thou spak'st concerning her.
For he who never yielded to a foe,
By her was vanquished and by love laid low.

DEIANIRA

This way my thoughts too, as thou bidst, inclined,
Nor will I fondly aggravate my trouble
By warring against Heaven. Let us indoors,
That thou may'st bear a message to my lord,
And, as a fit return for gifts received,
My gift withal. It were not meet that thou
Should'st leave me empty-handed, having come
Accompanied by such a goodly train.

[*Exeunt* LICHAS *and* DEIANIRA.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

μέγα τι σθένος ἁ Κύπρις ἐκφέρεται νίκας ἀεί.
καὶ τὰ μὲν θεῶν
παρέβαν, καὶ ὅπως Κρονίδαν ἀπάτασεν οὐ λέγω, 500
οὐδὲ τὸν ἔννυχον Ἅιδαν
ἢ Ποσειδάωνα τινάκτορα γαίας·
ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τάνδ' ἄρ' ἄκοιτιν
τίνες ἀμφίγυοι κατέβαν πρὸ γάμων,
τίνες πάμπληκτα παγκόνιτά τ' ἐξῆλθον ἄεθλ'
ἀγώνων;

ἀντ.

ὁ μὲν ἦν ποταμοῦ σθένος, ὑψίκερω τετραόρου
φάσμα ταύρου,
Ἀχελῷος ἀπ' Οἰνιαδᾶν, ὁ δὲ Βακχίας ἀπὸ 510
ἦλθε παλίντονα Θήβας
τόξα καὶ λόγχας ῥόπαλόν τε τινάσσων,
παῖς Διός· οἳ τότ' ἀολλεῖς
ἴσαν ἐς μέσον ἱέμενοι λεχέων·
μόνα δ' εὔλεκτρος ἐν μέσῳ Κύπρις ῥαβδονόμει
ξυνοῦσα.

τότ' ἦν χερός, ἦν δὲ τόξων πάταγος,
ταυρείων τ' ἀνάμιγδα κεράτων·
ἦν δ' ἀμφίπλεκτοι κλίμακες, 520
ἦν δὲ μετώπων ὀλόεντα
πλήγματα, καὶ στόνος ἀμφοῖν.

CHORUS (*Str.*)

Many a trophy of war the Cyprian bears away;
To tell of the triumphs she wins o'er gods I may not stay,
How the Olympian King and the Lord of the realms of night,
Yea, and the Shaker of Earth, Poseidon, owns her might.
Fitter theme for my song the well-matched champion pair,
Rivals who entered the lists to win the hand of the fair.
Dread the strife, and the sky with dust of battle was full.

(*Ant.*)

One was a river-god, four-footed and horned like a bull,
Oeneadae was his home and Acheloüs his name;
But from Thebè, beloved of Bacchus, the other came,
With bow and with brandished club and javelins twain at his side,
Child of Zeus. So they met and fought for a winsome bride.
But with her umpire wand the Cyprian Queen was there,
Goddess who rules the fight and assigns the hand of the fair.

Hark! the thud of fisted blow,
Crash of horns and twanging bow,
Grapplings close-entwined, and now
Buttings of the hornèd brow;
And amid the storm, in tones
Faint and muffled, deep-drawn groans.

ἁ δ' εὐῶπις ἁβρὰ
τηλαυγεῖ παρ' ὄχθῳ
ἧστο, τὸν ὃν προσμένουσ' ἀκοίταν.
ἀγὼν δὲ μαργᾷ[1] μὲν οἷα φράζω·
τὸ δ' ἀμφινείκητον ὄμμα νύμφας
ἐλεινὸν ἀμμένει·
κἀπὸ ματρὸς ἄφαρ βέβακεν,
ὥστε πόρτις ἐρήμα. 530

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἦμος, φίλαι, κατ' οἶκον ὁ ξένος θροεῖ
ταῖς αἰχμαλώτοις παισὶν ὡς ἐπ' ἐξόδῳ,
τῆμος θυραῖος ἦλθον ὡς ὑμᾶς λάθρᾳ,
τὰ μὲν φράσουσα χερσὶν ἁτεχνησάμην,
τὰ δ' οἷα πάσχω συγκατοικτιουμένη.
κόρην γάρ, οἶμαι δ' οὐκέτ', ἀλλ' ἐζευγμένην,
παρεισδέδεγμαι φόρτον ὥστε ναυτίλος,
λωβητὸν ἐμπόλημα τῆς ἐμῆς φρενός.
καὶ νῦν δύ' οὖσαι μίμνομεν μιᾶς ὑπὸ
χλαίνης ὑπαγκάλισμα. τοιάδ' Ἡρακλῆς, 540
ὁ πιστὸς ἡμῖν κἀγαθὸς καλούμενος,
οἰκούρι' ἀντέπεμψε τοῦ μακροῦ χρόνου.
ἐγὼ δὲ θυμοῦσθαι μὲν οὐκ ἐπίσταμαι
νοσοῦντι κείνῳ πολλὰ τῇδε τῇ νόσῳ·
τὸ δ' αὖ ξυνοικεῖν τῇδ' ὁμοῦ τίς ἂν γυνὴ
δύναιτο, κοινωνοῦσα τῶν αὐτῶν γάμων;
ὁρῶ γὰρ ἥβην τὴν μὲν ἕρπουσαν πρόσω,
τὴν δὲ φθίνουσαν· ὧν ἀφαρπάζειν φιλεῖ
ὀφθαλμὸς ἄνθος, τῶν δ' ὑπεκτρέπει πόδα.
ταῦτ' οὖν φοβοῦμαι μὴ πόσις μὲν Ἡρακλῆς 550
ἐμὸς καλῆται, τῆς νεωτέρας δ' ἀνήρ.

[1] ἐγὼ δὲ μάτηρ of MSS. is clearly corrupt. Jebb suggests, but does not print, ἀγὼν δὲ μαργᾷ.

But afar upon the sward
    Sate the tender tearful maid,
    While in doubt the battle swayed,
Musing who should be her lord.
Long she sate and wept forlorn,
    Then, like heifer driven to stray,
    Weanèd, from her dam away,
Sudden from her home was torn.

Enter DEIANIRA.

DEIANIRA

Friends, while our herald guest is in the house
Conversing with the captives, ere he leaves,
I have stolen forth to speak with you alone;
Partly to tell you what my hands have wrought,
And to command your sympathy. This maid—
No maiden she but mistress now, methinks—
I have harboured (as some merchant takes on board
An over-freight) to wreck my peace of mind.
And now we twain must share a common couch,
To one lord wedded. Such the recompense
That Heracles, whom I was wont to extol
As model of all virtue, makes me now
For all my faithful service as a wife.
Yet to be wroth with one like him, infect
With this love-plague, I cannot bring myself;
But then to share his bed and board with her—
What wife could bear it? She's the budding rose,
And I o'erblown and withering on the thorn.
Men cull the flower and when the bloom has fled
Fling it far from them. This then is my fear,
That Heracles will leave me the bare name
Of consort, while the younger is his wife.

ἀλλ' οὐ γάρ, ὥσπερ εἶπον, ὀργαίνειν καλὸν
γυναῖκα νοῦν ἔχουσαν· ᾗ δ' ἔχω, φίλαι,
λυτήριον λώφημα,[1] *τῇδ' ὑμῖν φράσω.*
ἦν μοι παλαιὸν δῶρον ἀρχαίου ποτὲ
θηρός, λέβητι χαλκέῳ κεκρυμμένον,
ὃ παῖς ἔτ' οὖσα τοῦ δασυστέρνου παρὰ
Νέσσου φθίνοντος ἐκ φονῶν ἀνειλόμην,
ὃς τὸν βαθύρρουν ποταμὸν Εὔηνον βροτοὺς
μισθοῦ 'πόρευε χερσίν, οὔτε πομπίμοις 560
κώπαις ἐρέσσων οὔτε λαίφεσιν νεώς.
ὃς κἀμέ, τὸν πατρῷον ἡνίκα στόλον
ξὺν Ἡρακλεῖ τὸ πρῶτον εὖνις ἑσπόμην,
φέρων ἐπ' ὤμοις, ἡνίκ' ἦ μέσῳ πόρῳ,
ψαύει ματαίαις χερσίν· ἐκ δ' ἤυσ' ἐγώ,
χὠ Ζηνὸς εὐθὺς παῖς ἐπιστρέψας χεροῖν
ἧκεν κομήτην ἰόν· ἐς δὲ πλεύμονας
στέρνων διερροίζησεν. ἐκθνῄσκων δ' ὁ θὴρ
τοσοῦτον εἶπε· παῖ γέροντος Οἰνέως,
τοσόνδ' ὀνήσει τῶν ἐμῶν, ἐὰν πίθῃ, 570
πορθμῶν, ὁθούνεχ' ὑστάτην σ' ἔπεμψ' ἐγώ·
ἐὰν γὰρ ἀμφίθρεπτον αἷμα τῶν ἐμῶν
σφαγῶν ἐνέγκῃ χερσίν, ᾗ μελαγχόλους
ἔβαψεν ἰοὺς θρέμμα Λερναίας ὕδρας,
ἔσται φρενός σοι τοῦτο κηλητήριον
τῆς Ἡρακλείας, ὥστε μήτιν' εἰσιδὼν
στέρξει γυναῖκα κεῖνος ἀντὶ σοῦ πλέον.
τοῦτ' ἐννοήσασ', ὦ φίλαι, δόμοις γὰρ ἦν
κείνου θανόντος ἐγκεκλῃμένον καλῶς,
χιτῶνα τόνδ' ἔβαψα, προσβαλοῦσ' ὅσα 580
ζῶν κεῖνος εἶπε· καὶ πεπείρανται τάδε.

[1] *λύπημα* MSS., Jebb corr.

But, as I said, 'tis folly to be wroth.
I have a better way to ease my pain,
A remedy that I will now reveal.
Stored in an urn of brass I long have kept
A keepsake of the old-world monster; this
The shaggy-breasted Nessus gave to me
While yet a girl, and from his wounded side
I took it as he lay at point of death;
Nessus who ferried wayfarers for hire
Across the deep Evenus in his arms,
Without the help of oar or sail. I too,
When first I went with Heracles, a bride
Assigned him by my sire; I too was borne
On his broad shoulders, and in mid-stream he
Touched me with wanton hands. I shrieked aloud,
He turned, the son of Zeus, and straight let fly
A winged shaft that, whizzing in the air,
Pierced to the lungs. Faint with approaching death
The Centaur spake: "Daughter of Oeneus old,
This profit of my ferrying at least,
As last of all I've ferried, shall be thine,
If thou wilt heed me. Gather with thy hands
The clotted gore that curdles round my wound,
Just where the Hydra, Lerna's monstrous breed,
Has tinged the barbèd arrow with her gall.
Thus shalt thou have a charm to bind the heart
Of Heracles, and never shall he look
On wife or maid to love her more than thee."
So I bethought me of this philtre, friends,
Which since the Centaur's death I had preserved
Locked in a secret place, and I have smeared
This robe as he directed while he lived.
My work is now accomplished. Far from me

κακὰς δὲ τόλμας μήτ' ἐπισταίμην ἐγὼ
μήτ' ἐκμάθοιμι, τάς τε τολμώσας στυγῶ·
φίλτροις δ' ἐάν πως τήνδ' ὑπερβαλώμεθα
τὴν παῖδα καὶ θέλκτροισι τοῖς ἐφ' Ἡρακλεῖ,
μεμηχάνηται τοὔργον, εἴ τι μὴ δοκῶ
πράσσειν μάταιον· εἰ δὲ μή, πεπαύσομαι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἴ τις ἐστὶ πίστις ἐν τοῖς δρωμένοις,
δοκεῖς παρ' ἡμῖν οὐ βεβουλεῦσθαι κακῶς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὕτως ἔχει γ' ἡ πίστις, ὡς τὸ μὲν δοκεῖν 590
ἔνεστι, πείρᾳ δ' οὐ προσωμίλησά πω·

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰδέναι χρὴ δρῶσαν, ὡς οὐδ' εἰ δοκεῖς
ἔχειν, ἔχοις ἂν γνῶμα, μὴ πειρωμένη.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' αὐτίκ' εἰσόμεσθα, τόνδε γὰρ βλέπω
θυραῖον ἤδη· διὰ τάχους δ' ἐλεύσεται.
μόνον παρ' ὑμῶν εὖ στεγοίμεθ'· ὡς σκότῳ
κἂν αἰσχρὰ πράσσῃς, οὔποτ' αἰσχύνῃ πεσεῖ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

τί χρὴ ποεῖν; σήμαινε, τέκνον Οἰνέως,
ὡς ἐσμὲν ἤδη τῷ μακρῷ χρόνῳ βραδεῖς.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' αὐτὰ δή σοι ταῦτα καὶ πράσσω, Λίχα, 600
ἕως σὺ ταῖς ἔσωθεν ἠγορῶ ξέναις,
ὅπως φέρῃς μοι τόνδε ταναϋφῆ πέπλον,
δώρημ' ἐκείνῳ τἀνδρὶ τῆς ἐμῆς χερός.
διδοὺς δὲ τόνδε φράζ' ὅπως μηδεὶς βροτῶν
κείνου πάροιθεν ἀμφιδύσεται χροΐ,
μηδ' ὄψεταί νιν μήτε φέγγος ἡλίου

Be thought of evil witch-craft or desire
To learn it; wives who try such arts I hate.
But how by love-charms I may win again
My Heracles and wean him from this maid,
This I have planned—unless indeed I seem
O'erwanton; if ye think so, I desist.

CHORUS

If thou hast warranty thy charm will work,
We think that thou hast counselled not amiss.

DEIANIRA

No warrant, for I have not tried it yet,
But of its potency I am assured.

CHORUS

Without experiment there cannot be
Assurance, howsoever firm thy faith.

DEIANIRA

Well, we shall know ere long, for there I see
Lichas just starting; he is at the gate.
Only do you be secret; e'en dark deeds
If they be done in darkness bring no blame.
Enter LICHAS

LICHAS

What are thy orders, child of Oeneus, say;
Already I have tarried over long.

DEIANIRA

Whilst thou wert talking with the maids within
I have been busied, Lichas, with thy charge,
This robe; 'twas woven by my hands, a gift
That thou must carry to my absent lord.
Instruct him straitly, when thou givest it,
That he, and none before him, put it on;
And let no sunlight, nor the altar flame
Behold it, nor the fire upon his hearth,

μήθ' ἕρκος ἱερὸν μήτ' ἐφέστιον σέλας,
πρὶν κεῖνος αὐτὸν φανερὸς ἐμφανῶς σταθεὶς
δείξῃ θεοῖσιν ἡμέρᾳ ταυροσφάγῳ.
οὕτω γὰρ ηὔγμην, εἴ ποτ' αὐτὸν ἐς δόμους 610
ἴδοιμι σωθέντ' ἢ κλύοιμι πανδίκως,
στελεῖν χιτῶνι τῷδε καὶ φανεῖν θεοῖς
θυτῆρα καινῷ καινὸν ἐν πεπλώματι.
καὶ τῶνδ' ἀποίσεις σῆμ', ὃ κεῖνος εὐμαθὲς
σφραγῖδος ἕρκει τῷδ' ἐπὸν μαθήσεται.[1]
ἀλλ' ἕρπε, καὶ φύλασσε πρῶτα μὲν νόμον,
τὸ μὴ 'πιθυμεῖν πομπὸς ὢν περισσὰ δρᾶν·
ἔπειθ' ὅπως ἂν ἡ χάρις κείνου τέ σοι
κἀμοῦ ξυνελθοῦσ' ἐξ ἁπλῆς διπλῆ φανῇ.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἀλλ' εἴπερ Ἑρμοῦ τήνδε πομπεύω τέχνην 620
βέβαιον, οὔ τι μὴ σφαλῶ γ' ἐν σοί ποτε,
τὸ μὴ οὐ τόδ' ἄγγος ὡς ἔχει δεῖξαι φέρων,
λόγων τε πίστιν ὧν λέγεις[2] ἐφαρμόσαι.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

στείχοις ἂν ἤδη· καὶ γὰρ ἐξεπίστασαι
τά γ' ἐν δόμοισιν ὡς ἔχοντα τυγχάνει.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ἐπίσταμαί τε καὶ φράσω σεσωσμένα.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ἀλλ' οἶσθα μὲν δὴ καὶ τὰ τῆς ξένης ὁρῶν
προσδέγματ', αὐτὴν ὡς ἐδεξάμην φίλως.

ΛΙΧΑΣ

ὥστ' ἐκπλαγῆναι τοὐμὸν ἡδονῇ κέαρ.

[1] ἐπ' ὄμμα θήσεται MSS., Billerbeck corr.
[2] ἔχεις MSS., Wunder corr.

Till he stand forth in sight of all arrayed
For gods to see it, at some solemn feast.
For I had vowed, if ever I should see
Or hear for certain of his safe return,
To invest him in this newly-woven robe,
And so present him duly to the gods,
A votary for the sacrifice new-dight.
And as a token point him out this seal,
The impress of my signet-ring, that he
Will surely recognise.
Now go thy way,
And heed the rule of messengers, nor let
Thy zeal outrun thy orders, but so act
That thou may'st win a double meed of thanks
For service rendered both to him and me.

LICHAS

Call me no master of the mystery
Of Hermes, if in ought I trip or fail—
Deliver not this casket as it is,
And add in attestation of the gift
Thy very words.

DEIANIRA

Thou may'st be going now.
How things are in the house thou know'st full well.

LICHAS

I know, and will report all safe and sound.

DEIANIRA

And thou canst tell him of the captive maid—
How kindly I received and welcomed her.

LICHAS

Yea, I was filled with wonder and delight.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ἄλλο γ' ἐννέποις; δέδοικα γὰρ 630
μὴ πρῷ λέγοις ἂν τὸν πόθον τὸν ἐξ ἐμοῦ,
πρὶν εἰδέναι τἀκεῖθεν εἰ ποθούμεθα.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ ναύλοχα καὶ πετραῖα στρ. α'
θερμὰ λουτρὰ καὶ πάγους
Οἴτας παραναιετάοντες, οἵ τε μέσσαν Μηλίδα πὰρ
λίμναν
χρυσαλακάτου τ' ἀκτὰν κόρας,
ἔνθ' Ἑλλάνων ἀγοραὶ
Πυλάτιδες κλέονται·

ὁ καλλιβόας τάχ' ὑμῖν ἀντ. α' 640
αὐλὸς οὐκ ἀναρσίαν
ἀχῶν καναχὰν ἐπάνεισιν, ἀλλὰ θείας ἀντίλυρον
μούσας.
ὁ γὰρ Διὸς Ἀλκμήνας κόρος
σοῦται πάσας ἀρετᾶς
λάφυρ' ἔχων ἐπ' οἴκους·

ὃν ἀπόπτολιν εἴχομεν παντᾷ, στρ. β'
δυοκαιδεκάμηνον ἀμμένουσαι
χρόνον, πελάγιον, ἴδριες οὐδέν·
ἁ δέ οἱ φίλα δάμαρ 650
τάλαιναν δυστάλαινα καρδίαν
πάγκλαυτος αἰὲν ὤλλυτο·
νῦν δ' Ἄρης οἰστρηθεὶς
ἐξέλυσ' ἐπίπονον ἁμέραν.

ἀφίκοιτ' ἀφίκοιτο· μὴ σταίη ἀντ. β'
πολύκωπον ὄχημα ναὸς αὐτῷ,

DEIANIRA

What further message have I? None, I fear;
To tell him of my longing were too soon,
Before I know that he too longs for me.

[*Exeunt* LICHAS *and* DEIANIRA.

CHORUS

Ye who on Oeta dwell, (*Str.* 1)
Or where the hot springs well
And down the cliffs their steaming waters pour;
Or by the inmost shore
Of Malis, where the golden-arrowed Maid
Haunts the green glade,
Where at thy Gates, far-famed from times of old,
Greeks counsel hold;

Soon shall the clear-voiced flute (*Ant.* 1)
Sweet as Apollo's lute,
Echo amid your hills and vales again,
No sad funereal strain,
But hymeneals meet for gods to hear.
For now he draweth near,
The Zeus-born conqueror, Alcmena's son,
His victory won.

Him twelve weary months we wait. (*Str.* 2)
Wondering what may be his fate;
And his true wife wastes away,
Pining at her lord's delay.
But the War-god, with his foes
Wroth, has given at last repose.

Spread the sail and ply the oar, (*Ant.* 2)
Waft him, breezes, from the shore,

πρὶν τάνδε πρὸς πόλιν ἀνύσειε,
νασιῶτιν ἑστίαν
ἀμείψας, ἔνθα κλῄζεται θυτήρ·
ὅθεν μόλοι πανίμερος,[1] 660
τᾶς πειθοῦς παγχρίστῳ
συγκραθεὶς ἐπὶ προφάσει φάρους.[2]

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

γυναῖκες, ὡς δέδοικα μὴ περαιτέρω
πεπραγμέν' ᾖ μοι πάνθ' ὅσ' ἀρτίως ἔδρων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστι, Δῃάνειρα, τέκνον Οἰνέως;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐκ οἶδ'· ἀθυμῶ δ', εἰ φανήσομαι τάχα
κακὸν μέγ' ἐκπράξασ' ἀπ' ἐλπίδος καλῆς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ δή τι τῶν σῶν Ἡρακλεῖ δωρημάτων;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

μάλιστά γ', ὥστε μήποτ' ἂν προθυμιαν
ἄδηλον ἔργου τῳ παραινέσαι λαβεῖν. 670

ΧΟΡΟΣ

δίδαξον, εἰ διδακτόν, ἐξ ὅτου φοβεῖ.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τοιοῦτον ἐκβέβηκεν οἷον, ἢν φράσω,
γυναῖκες, ὑμᾶς[3] θαῦμ' ἀνέλπιστον μαθεῖν.
ᾧ γὰρ τὸν ἐνδυτῆρα πέπλον ἀρτίως
ἔχριον, ἀργῆς οἰὸς εὐέρου πόκος,[4]
τοῦτ' ἠφάνισται διάβορον πρὸς οὐδενὸς
τῶν ἔνδον, ἀλλ' ἐδεστὸν ἐξ αὑτοῦ φθίνει,

[1] πανάμερος MSS., Mudge corr.
[2] θηρός MSS., Haupt corr. [3] ὑμῖν MSS., Jebb corr.
[4] ἀργῆτ' . . . πόκῳ MSS., Lobeck corr.

Where to Zeus, his vows all paid,
Sacrifices he hath made.
May the magic mantle fire
All his heart with fond desire,
Speed him to his true love's arms
Captive to her subtle charms.

Enter DEIANIRA.

DEIANIRA

Maidens, I fear I have been over bold
And ill advised in all I did of late.

CHORUS

What mean'st thou, Deianira, Oeneus' child.

DEIANIRA

I know not, but I tremble lest deceived
By fond hopes I have wrought a grievous harm.

CHORUS

Thou speak'st not of thy gift to Heracles?

DEIANIRA

'Tis so; and I would henceforth counsel none
To act in haste, unless the issue's clear.

CHORUS

Tell, if thou may'st, the cause of thy alarm.

DEIANIRA

My friends, a thing has come to pass, so strange
That, if I tell it, you will deem you hear
A miracle. The flock of wool wherewith
E'en now I smeared the festal robe ('twas plucked
From a white fleece) has disappeared, untouched
By aught within the house, but self-consumed

καὶ ψῇ κατ' ἄκρας σπιλάδος· ὡς δ' εἰδῇς ἅπαν,
ᾗ τοῦτ' ἐπράχθη, μείζον' ἐκτενῶ λόγον.
ἐγὼ γὰρ ὧν ὁ θήρ με Κένταυρος, πονῶν 680
πλευρὰν πικρᾷ γλωχῖνι, προυδιδάξατο
παρῆκα θεσμῶν οὐδέν, ἀλλ' ἐσῳζόμην
χαλκῆς ὅπως δύσνιπτον ἐκ δέλτου γραφήν.
καί μοι τάδ' ἦν πρόρρητα καὶ τοιαῦτ' ἔδρων·
τὸ φάρμακον τοῦτ' ἄπυρον ἀκτῖνός τ' ἀεὶ
θερμῆς ἄθικτον ἐν μυχοῖς σῴζειν ἐμέ,
ἕως νιν ἀρτίχριστον ἁρμόσαιμί που.
κἄδρων τοιαῦτα. νῦν δ', ὅτ' ἦν ἐργαστέον,
ἔχρισα μὲν κατ' οἶκον ἐν δόμοις κρυφῇ
μαλλῷ, σπάσασα κτησίου βοτοῦ λάχνην, 690
κἄθηκα συμπτύξασ' ἀλαμπὲς ἡλίου
κοίλῳ ζυγάστρῳ δῶρον, ὥσπερ εἴδετε.
εἴσω δ' ἀποστείχουσα δέρκομαι φάτιν
ἄφραστον, ἀξύμβλητον ἀνθρώπῳ μαθεῖν.
τὸ γὰρ κάταγμα τυγχάνω ῥίψασά πως
τῆς οἰός, ᾧ προὔχριον, ἐς μέσην φλόγα,
ἀκτῖν' ἐς ἡλιῶτιν· ὡς δ' ἐθάλπετο,
ῥεῖ πᾶν ἄδηλον καὶ κατέψηκται χθονί,
μορφῇ μάλιστ' εἰκαστὸν ὥστε πρίονος
ἐκβρώματ' ἂν βλέψειας ἐν τομῇ ξύλου. 700
τοιόνδε κεῖται προπετές· ἐκ δὲ γῆς, ὅθεν
προὔκειτ', ἀναζέουσι θρομβώδεις ἀφροί,
γλαυκῆς ὀπώρας ὥστε πίονος ποτοῦ
χυθέντος εἰς γῆν Βακχίας ἀπ' ἀμπέλου.
ὥστ' οὐκ ἔχω τάλαινα ποῖ γνώμης πέσω·
ὁρῶ δέ μ' ἔργον δεινὸν ἐξειργασμένην.
πόθεν γὰρ ἄν ποτ', ἀντὶ τοῦ θνῄσκων ὁ θὴρ
ἐμοὶ παρέσχ' εὔνοιαν, ἧς ἔθνῃσχ' ὕπερ;
οὐκ ἔστιν, ἀλλὰ τὸν βαλόντ' ἀποφθίσαι

It wasted, melting on the flags, away.
But all that chanced I will relate in full.
The precepts given me by the Centaur-beast,
What time the barb was rankling in his side,
Fixed in my memory, like some ordinance
Graven on brass indelible, I kept.
All that he then commanded me I did:
He bade me hide in some dark nook the salve,
Remote from firelight and the sun's hot ray,
Till I had need to use it, freshly smeared.
And so I did, and, when the occasion rose,
I took a tuft of wool that I had plucked
From one of our home flock; therewith I spread
The unguent in my chamber privily;
Then folded and within its coffer laid,
Safe from the sunlight, as ye saw, my gift.
But as I passed indoors behold a sight
Portentous, well nigh inconceivable.
It chanced that I had thrown the hank of wool
Used for the smearing into the full blaze
Of sunlight; with the gradual warmth dissolved
It shrank and shrivelled up till naught was left
Save a fine powder, likest to the dust
That strews the ground when sawyers are at work—
Mere dust and ashes. But from out the spot
Where lay the strewments clotted froth upwelled,
As when the spilth of Bacchus, from the grapes
New pressed and purple, on the ground is poured.
Thus I for trouble know not where to turn,
And only see a fearful thing I have done.
Why should the dying Centaur then have shown
Regard for me, the author of his death?
Impossible! no, he was cozening me,

χρῄζων ἔθελγέ μ'· ὧν ἐγὼ μεθύστερον, 710
ὅτ' οὐκέτ' ἀρκεῖ, τὴν μάθησιν ἄρνυμαι.
μόνη γὰρ αὐτόν, εἴ τι μὴ ψευσθήσομαι
γνώμης, ἐγὼ δύστηνος ἐξαποφθερῶ·
τὸν γὰρ βαλόντ' ἄτρακτον οἶδα καὶ θεὸν
Χείρωνα πημήναντα, χὦνπερ ἂν θίγῃ,
φθείρει τὰ πάντα κνώδαλ'· ἐκ δὲ τοῦδ' ὅδε
σφαγῶν διελθὼν ἰὸς αἵματος μέλας
πῶς οὐκ ὀλεῖ καὶ τόνδε; δόξῃ γοῦν ἐμῇ.
καίτοι δέδοκται, κεῖνος εἰ σφαλήσεται,
ταὐτῇ σὺν ὁρμῇ κἀμὲ συνθανεῖν ἅμα· 720
ζῆν γὰρ κακῶς κλύουσαν οὐκ ἀνασχετόν,
ἥτις προτιμᾷ μὴ κακὴ πεφυκέναι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ταρβεῖν μὲν ἔργα δείν' ἀναγκαίως ἔχει,
τὴν δ' ἐλπίδ' οὐ χρὴ τῆς τύχης κρίνειν πάρος.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς μὴ καλοῖς βουλεύμασιν
οὐδ' ἐλπίς, ἥτις καὶ θράσος τι προξενεῖ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἀμφὶ τοῖς σφαλεῖσι μὴ 'ξ ἑκουσίας
ὀργὴ πέπειρα, τῆς σε τυγχάνειν πρέπει.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τοιαῦτα δ' ἂν λέξειεν οὐχ ὁ τοῦ κακοῦ
κοινωνός, ἀλλ' ᾧ μηδέν ἐστ' οἴκοι βαρύ. 730

ΧΟΡΟΣ

σιγᾶν ἂν ἁρμόζοι σε τὸν πλείω λόγον,
εἰ μή τι λέξεις παιδὶ τῷ σαυτῆς· ἐπεὶ
πάρεστι, μαστὴρ πατρὸς ὃς πρὶν ᾤχετο.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὦ μῆτερ, ὡς ἂν ἐκ τριῶν σ' ἓν εἱλόμην,
ἢ μηκέτ' εἶναι ζῶσαν, ἢ σεσωσμένην

And sought, through me, his slayer to undo.
Too late, too late, when knowledge naught avails,
My eyes are opened. I alone am doomed,
(Unless my fears prove false) to slay my lord.
I know the shaft that slew the Centaur scathed
E'en Cheiron, though a god, and any beast
It touches dies. So the black venomed gore
That from the wound of Nessus oozed must slay
Likewise my lord. Thus I, alas, must think.
Howbeit I am resolved, if fall he must,
The selfsame stroke of fate shall end my days.
What woman noble born would dare live on
Dishonoured when her fair repute is gone?

CHORUS

'Tis true dread perils threaten; yet 'twere well
To cherish hope till the event be known.

DEIANIRA

They who have counselled ill cannot admit
One ray of hope to fortify their soul.

CHORUS

Men will not look severely on an act
Unwittingly committed, as was thine.

DEIANIRA

With a good conscience one might urge this plea
Which ill becomes a partner in the crime.

CHORUS

'Twere better to refrain from further speech,
Unless thou wouldst address thy son; for he
Who went to seek his father is at hand.

Enter HYLLUS.

HYLLUS

Mother, I would that of three wishes one
Were granted me—that thou wert lying dead,

ἄλλου κεκλῆσθαι μητέρ', ἢ λῴους φρένας
τῶν νῦν παρουσῶν τῶνδ' ἀμείψασθαί ποθεν.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

τί δ' ἐστίν, ὦ παῖ, πρός γ' ἐμοῦ στυγούμενον;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

τὸν ἄνδρα τὸν σὸν ἴσθι, τὸν δ' ἐμὸν λέγω
πατέρα, κατακτείνασα τῇδ' ἐν ἡμέρᾳ. 740

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

οἴμοι, τίν' ἐξήνεγκας, ὦ τέκνον, λόγον;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὃν οὐχ οἷόν τε μὴ οὐ τελεσθῆναι· τὸ γὰρ
φανθὲν τίς ἂν δύναιτ' ἂν ἀγένητον ποεῖν;

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

πῶς εἶπας, ὦ παῖ; τοῦ παρ' ἀνθρώπων μαθὼν
ἄζηλον οὕτως ἔργον εἰργάσθαι με φῄς;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

αὐτὸς βαρεῖαν ξυμφορὰν ἐν ὄμμασιν
πατρὸς δεδορκὼς κοὐ κατὰ γλῶσσαν κλύων.

ΔΗΙΑΝΕΙΡΑ

ποῦ δ' ἐμπελάζεις τἀνδρὶ καὶ παρίστασαι;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

εἰ χρὴ μαθεῖν σε, πάντα δὴ φωνεῖν χρεών.
ὅθ' εἷρπε κλεινὴν Εὐρύτου πέρσας πόλιν, 750
νίκης ἄγων τροπαῖα κἀκροθίνια,
ἀκτή τις ἀμφίκλυστος Εὐβοίας ἄκρον
Κήναιόν ἐστιν, ἔνθα πατρῴῳ Διὶ
βωμοὺς ὁρίζει τεμενίαν τε φυλλάδα·
οὗ νιν τὰ πρῶτ' ἐσεῖδον ἄσμενος πόθῳ.
μέλλοντι δ' αὐτῷ πολυθύτους τεύχειν σφαγὰς
κῆρυξ ἀπ' οἴκων ἵκετ' οἰκεῖος Λίχας,
τὸ σὸν φέρων δώρημα, θανάσιμον πέπλον·

Or, if alive, no mother wert of mine,
Or that thy nature might be wholly changed.

DEIANIRA

What dost thou so abhor in me, my son?

HYLLUS

Woman, I tell thee thou hast done to death
Thy husband, yea my sire, this very day.

DEIANIRA

Ah me! what word hath passed thy lips, my son?

HYLLUS

A word that of fulfilment shall not fail;
For what is done no mortal can undo.

DEIANIRA

What say'st thou, son? What warranty is thine
To charge me with a deed so terrible?

HYLLUS

The evidence of my eyes; myself I saw
My father's anguish; 'tis no hearsay charge.

DEIANIRA

Where didst thou find him? wast thou by his side?

HYLLUS

As thou must hear it, I must tell thee all.
He had sacked the famous town of Eurytus,
And thence returning rich with spoils of war,
Had reached a sea-washed promontory, named
Cenaeum, where Euboea fronts the north.
There I first met him as he marked the bounds
Of altars and a sacred grove to Zeus,
His father. At the sight my heart was glad.
He stood addressed to offer sacrifice,
A lordly hecatomb, when Lichas came,
His own familiar herald, bringing him

ὃν κεῖνος ἐνδύς, ὡς σὺ προυξεφίεσο,
ταυροκτονεῖ μὲν δώδεκ' ἐντελεῖς ἔχων 760
λείας ἀπαρχὴν βοῦς· ἀτὰρ τὰ πάνθ' ὁμοῦ
ἑκατὸν προσῆγε συμμιγῆ βοσκήματα.
καὶ πρῶτα μὲν δείλαιος ἵλεῳ φρενί,
κόσμῳ τε χαίρων καὶ στολῇ, κατηύχετο·
ὅπως δὲ σεμνῶν ὀργίων ἐδαίετο
φλὸξ αἱματηρὰ κἀπὸ πιείρας δρυός,
ἱδρὼς ἀνῄει χρωτί, καὶ προσπτύσσεται
πλευραῖσιν ἀρτίκολλος, ὥστε τέκτονος,
χιτὼν ἅπαν κατ' ἄρθρον· ἦλθε δ' ὀστέων
ἀδαγμὸς ἀντίσπαστος· εἶτα φοινίας 770
ἐχθρᾶς ἐχίδνης ἰὸς ὣς ἐδαίνυτο.
ἐνταῦθα δὴ 'βόησε τὸν δυσδαίμονα
Λίχαν, τὸν οὐδὲν αἴτιον τοῦ σοῦ κακοῦ,
ποίαις ἐνέγκοι τόνδε μηχαναῖς πέπλον·
ὁ δ' οὐδὲν εἰδὼς δύσμορος τὸ σὸν μόνης
δώρημ' ἔλεξεν, ὥσπερ ἦν ἐσταλμένον.
κἀκεῖνος ὡς ἤκουσε καὶ διώδυνος
σπαραγμὸς αὐτοῦ πλευμόνων ἀνθήψατο,
μάρψας ποδός νιν, ἄρθρον ᾗ λυγίζεται,
ῥιπτεῖ πρὸς ἀμφίκλυστον ἐκ πόντου πέτραν· 780
κόμης δὲ λευκὸν μυελὸν ἐκραίνει, μέσου
κρατὸς διασπαρέντος αἵματός θ' ὁμοῦ.
ἅπας δ' ἀνηυφήμησεν οἰμωγῇ λεώς,
τοῦ μὲν νοσοῦντος, τοῦ δὲ διαπεπραγμένου·
κοὐδεὶς ἐτόλμα τἀνδρὸς ἀντίον μολεῖν.
ἐσπᾶτο γὰρ πέδονδε καὶ μετάρσιος,
βοῶν, ἰύζων· ἀμφὶ δ' ἐκτύπουν πέτραι,
Λοκρῶν τ' ὄρειοι πρῶνες Εὐβοίας τ' ἄκραι.

Thy gift, the fatal robe; he put it on
According to thy precept; then began
His sacrifice with twice six faultless bulls,
The firstfruits of the booty; but in all
A hundred victims at the altar bled.
At first, poor wretch, with joyous air serene,
Proud of the pomp and ceremony, he prayed;
But when the blood-red flame began to blaze
From the high altars and the resinous pine,
A sweat broke out upon him; and the coat
Stuck to his side, and clung to every limb,
Glued, as it were, by some skilled artisan.
A pricking pain began to rack his bones.
Soon the fell venom of the hydra dire
Worked inward and devoured him. Thereupon
He called for Lichas, who, poor witless wretch,
Had in thy guilt no part or lot, demanding
Who hatched the plot and why he had brought the robe.
The youth unwitting said it was thy gift,
Thine only, and delivered as 'twas sent.
While yet he listened a convulsive spasm
Shot through his lungs. He caught him by the foot,
Just at the ankle joint, and hurled him full
Against a rock out-jutting from the foam:
His skull was crushed to fragments, and his hair
Bedaubed with blood and flecked with scattered brains.
A cry of horror from the crowd arose
At sight of one distraught and one struck dead;
And no man dared to face him, for the pain
Now dragged him down, now made him leap in air,
While with his yells and screams the rocks resound
From Locrian headlands to Euboean capes.

ἐπεὶ δ᾽ ἀπεῖπε, πολλὰ μὲν τάλας χθονὶ
ῥίπτων ἑαυτόν, πολλὰ δ᾽ οἰμωγῇ βοῶν, 790
τὸ δυσπάρευνον λέκτρον ἐνδατούμενος
σοῦ τῆς ταλαίνης, καὶ τὸν Οἰνέως γάμον
οἷον κατακτήσαιτο λυμαντὴν βίου,
τότ᾽ ἐκ προσέδρου λιγνύος διάστροφον
ὀφθαλμὸν ἄρας εἶδέ μ᾽ ἐν πολλῷ στρατῷ
δακρυρροοῦντα, καί με προσβλέψας καλεῖ·
ὦ παῖ, πρόσελθε, μὴ φύγῃς τοὐμὸν κακόν,
μηδ᾽ εἴ σε χρὴ θανόντι συνθανεῖν ἐμοί·
ἀλλ᾽ ἆρον ἔξω, καὶ μάλιστα μέν με θὲς
ἐνταῦθ᾽ ὅπου με μή τις ὄψεται βροτῶν· 800
εἰ δ᾽ οἶκτον ἴσχεις, ἀλλά μ᾽ ἔκ γε τῆσδε γῆς
πόρθμευσον ὡς τάχιστα, μηδ᾽ αὐτοῦ θάνω.
τοσαῦτ᾽ ἐπισκήψαντος, ἐν μέσῳ σκάφει
θέντες σφε πρὸς γῆν τήνδ᾽ ἐκέλσαμεν μόλις
βρυχώμενον σπασμοῖσι· καί νιν αὐτίκα
ἢ ζῶντ᾽ ἐσόψεσθ᾽ ἢ τεθνηκότ᾽ ἀρτίως.
τοιαῦτα, μῆτερ, πατρὶ βουλεύσασ᾽ ἐμῷ
καὶ δρῶσ᾽ ἐλήφθης, ὧν σε ποίνιμος Δίκη
τίσαιτ᾽ Ἐρινύς τ᾽. εἰ θέμις δ᾽, ἐπεύχομαι·
θέμις δ᾽, ἐπεί μοι τὴν θέμιν σὺ προὔβαλες, 810
πάντων ἄριστον ἄνδρα τῶν ἐπὶ χθονὶ
κτείνασ᾽, ὁποῖον ἄλλον οὐκ ὄψει ποτέ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί σῖγ᾽ ἀφέρπεις; οὐ κάτοισθ᾽ ὁθούνεκα
ξυνηγορεῖς σιγῶσα τῷ κατηγόρῳ;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἐᾶτ᾽ ἀφέρπειν· οὖρος ὀφθαλμῶν ἐμῶν
αὐτῇ γένοιτ᾽ ἄπωθεν ἑρπούσῃ καλός.
ὄγκον γὰρ ἄλλως ὀνόματος τί δεῖ τρέφειν

But when his agony had spent itself—
Now writhing prone, now making loud lament,
With curses on his marriage bed and thee,
The bride he won from Oeneus for his bane—
From out the cloud of smoke that compassed him
He wildly gazed and spied me in the throng
Weeping, and fixed his eye on me and spake:
"Come hither, boy, shun not my misery,
E'en if my son must share his father's death,
But bear me hence and set me, if thou wilt,
Where none shall see me more, no matter where;
Or if thou hast no heart for this, at least
Ferry me quickly hence, lest here I die."
So he enjoined. We laid him on the deck
In torment, groaning loud; and presently
Ye shall behold him living or just dead.
Such, mother, is the evil 'gainst my sire
That thou hast planned and wrought. Thy guilt is plain:
May Vengeance and the Erinys visit thee!
So pray I, if 'tis right, and right it is,
For I have seen thee trample on the right,
Slaying the noblest man who ever lived,
Whose peer thou never shalt behold again.

[*Exit* DEIANIRA.

CHORUS

Why dost thou steal away thus silently?
Such silence sure is eloquent of guilt.

HYLLUS

Let her depart and speed before the gale
Out of my sight. Why should the empty name
Of mother henceforth swell her vanity,

μητρῷον, ἥτις μηδὲν ὡς τεκοῦσα δρᾷ;
ἀλλ' ἑρπέτω χαίρουσα· τὴν δὲ τέρψιν ἣν
τὠμῷ δίδωσι πατρί, τήνδ' αὐτὴ λάβοι. 820

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἴδ' οἷον, ὦ παῖδες, προσέμιξεν ἄφαρ στρ. α'.
τοὔπος τὸ θεοπρόπον ἡμῖν
τᾶς παλαιφάτου προνοίας,
ὅ τ' ἔλακεν, ὁπότε τελεόμηνος ἐκφέροι
δωδέκατος ἄροτος, ἀναδοχὰν τελεῖν πόνων
τῷ Διὸς αὐτόπαιδι· καὶ τάδ' ὀρθῶς
ἔμπεδα κατουρίζει. πῶς γὰρ ἂν ὁ μὴ λεύσσων
ἔτι ποτ' ἔτ' ἐπίπονον πόνων[1] ἔχοι θανὼν λα-
τρείαν; 830

εἰ γάρ σφε Κενταύρου φονίᾳ νεφέλᾳ ἀντ. α'
χρίει δολοποιὸς ἀνάγκα
πλευρά, προστακέντος ἰοῦ,
ὃν τέκετο θάνατος, ἔτρεφε[2] δ' αἰόλος δράκων,
πῶς ὅδ' ἂν ἀέλιον ἕτερον ἢ τανῦν ἴδοι,
δεινοτάτῳ μὲν ὕδρας προστετακὼς
φάσματι; μελαγχαίτα δ' ἄμμιγά νιν αἰκίζει
Νέσσου ὑποφόνια δολιόμυθα[3] κέντρ' ἐπιζέσαντα. 840

στρ. β'

ὧν ἅδ' ἁ τλάμων ἄοκνος μεγάλαν προορῶσα
δόμοισι βλάβαν νέων
ἀΐσσουσαν[4] γάμων τὰ μὲν αὐτὰ[5] προσέβαλε, τὰ
δ' ἀπ' ἀλλόθρου

[1] Gleditsch inserts πόνων. [2] ἔτεκε MSS., Lobeck corr.
[3] νέσσου θ' ὑποφοίνια δολόμυθα MSS., Gleditsch corr.
[4] ἀϊσσόντων MSS., Nauck corr. [5] οὔ τι MSS., Blaydes corr.

Who in her deeds shows naught of motherhood?
Let her depart in peace, and may she share
Herself the happiness she brings my sire!

CHORUS

Lo, maidens, in our eyes (*Str.* 1)
Fulfilled this day
The word inspired of ancient prophecies.
Did not the god's voice say,
The twelfth year, when its tale of months is run,
Shall end his toils for Zeus's true-born son?
That promise doth not fail,
'Tis wafted on the gale.
Can he when once the light of life has fled
Be subject still to bondage 'mongst the dead?

(*Ant.* 1)

And if the mists of death enfold him now,
If the doom grips his heart,
Wrought by the Centaur's art;
How racked by venom bred
Of Death, on asp's blood fed,
How in the clutches of the Hydra, how
Can he survive to see to-morrow's sun,
When through each vein doth run
The leprous bane prepared
By the fell beast, black-haired
Nessus, his life to drain,
And vex him with tumultuous pain?

Of this our ill-starred queen, (*Str.* 2)
All innocent, knew naught:
Only the curse to void, I ween,
Of a new bride she sought.

γνώμας μολόντ' ὀλεθρίαισι συναλλαγαῖς
ἦ που ὀλοὰ στένει,
ἦ που ἀδινῶν χλωρὰν
τέγγει δακρύων ἄχναν.
ἁ δ' ἐρχομένα μοῖρα προφαίνει δολίαν 850
καὶ μεγάλαν ἄταν.

ἀντ. β'

ἔρρωγεν παγὰ δακρύων· κέχυται νόσος, ὢ πόποι,
    οἷον ἀναρσίων
οὔπω Ἡρακλέους[1] ἀγακλειτὸν ἐπέμολε πάθος
    οἰκτίσαι.
ἰὼ κελαινὰ λόγχα προμάχου δορός,
ἃ τότε θοὰν νύμφαν
ἄγαγες ἀπ' αἰπεινᾶς
τάνδ' Οἰχαλίας αἰχμᾷ·
ἁ δ' ἀμφίπολος Κύπρις ἄναυδος φανερὰ 860
τῶνδ' ἐφάνη πράκτωρ.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ α'

πότερον ἐγὼ μάταιος, ἢ κλύω τινὸς
οἴκτου δι' οἴκων ἀρτίως ὁρμωμένου;
τί φημι;

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ β'

ἠχεῖ τις οὐκ ἄσημον, ἀλλὰ δυστυχῆ
κωκυτὸν εἴσω, καί τι καινίζει στέγη.

ΗΜΙΧΟΡΙΟΝ

ξύνες δὲ
τήνδ' ὡς κατηφὴς[2] καὶ συνωφρυωμένη
χωρεῖ πρὸς ἡμᾶς γραῖα σημανοῦσά τι. 870

[1] Ἡρακλέους is clearly a gloss, and the true reading must remain conjectural. [2] ἀήθης MSS., Blaydes corr.

Witless a stranger's remedy she used.
How was her fond simplicity abused!
Too late her error doth she rue,
And pearly tears her eyes bedew:
Awe-stricken we await
The swoop of instant fate.

Our pent up tears outflow. (*Ant.* 2)
Ye gods! did e'er such blow
From his worst foes afflict our King before
As this fell plague? O bloodstained spear that bore
From proud Oechalia's height
Stormed by the hero's might,
A vanished bride, how clear
The Cyprian's wiles appear!
Unseen, thy spear she steeled,
And now she stands revealed.

SEMI-CHORUS 1

Listen! I seem to hear—or do I dream?—
A cry of sorrow pealing through the house.
Heard you it?

SEMI-CHORUS 2

Yea, a despairing wail rings out within,
Distinct; the house has suffered something strange.

CHORUS

Mark ye that aged crone!
With what a cloud upon her puckered brow
She comes to bring us news of grave import!

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ὦ παῖδες, ὡς ἄρ' ἡμὶν οὐ σμικρῶν κακῶν
ἦρξεν τὸ δῶρον Ἡρακλεῖ τὸ πόμπιμον.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δ', ὦ γεραιά, καινοποιηθὲν λέγεις;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

βέβηκε Δῃάνειρα τὴν πανυστάτην
ὁδῶν ἁπασῶν ἐξ ἀκινήτου ποδός.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οὐ δή ποθ' ὡς θανοῦσα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

πάντ' ἀκήκοας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τέθνηκεν ἡ τάλαινα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

δεύτερον κλύεις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τάλαιν' ὀλεθρία· τίνι τρόπῳ θανεῖν σφε φής;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

σχετλιώτατά γε πρὸς πρᾶξιν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εἰπὲ τῷ μόρῳ,
γύναι, ξυντρέχει. 880

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

αὑτὴν διηΐστωσε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς θυμὸς ἢ τίνες νόσοι
τάνδ' αἰχμᾷ[1] βέλεος κακοῦ ξυνεῖλε; πως ἐμήσατο
πρὸς θανάτῳ θάνατον ἀνύσασα μόνα;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

στονόεντος ἐν τομᾷ σιδάρου.

[1] αἰχμὰν MSS., Hermann corr.

Enter NURSE *from the house.*

NURSE

My daughters, what a crop of miseries
We are reaping from that gift to Heracles!

CHORUS

What new misfortune, mother, hast to tell?

NURSE

Deianira has departed hence
On her last journey, yet not stirred a step.

CHORUS

Thou canst not mean she is dead.

NURSE

My tale is told.

CHORUS

Poor lady, dead!

NURSE

I say it once again.

CHORUS

Alas, poor wretch! How came she by her end?

NURSE

O 'twas a gruesome deed!

CHORUS

Say woman, how?

NURSE

By her own hand.

CHORUS

What rage, what fit of madness,
Whetted the felon blade, how compassed she
This death on death, herself alone the cause?

NURSE

By the stroke of a dolorous sword.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπεῖδες, ὦ ματαία, τάνδε τὴν ὕβριν;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ἐπεῖδον, ὡς δὴ πλησία παραστάτις.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τίς ἦν; πῶς; φέρ᾽ εἰπέ. 890

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

αὐτὴ πρὸς αὑτῆς χειροποιεῖται τάδε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί φωνεῖς;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

σαφηνῆ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔτεκεν ἔτεκε δὴ μεγάλαν
ἁ νέορτος ἅδε νύμφα
δόμοισι τοῖσδ᾽ ἐρινύν.

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

ἄγαν γε· μᾶλλον δ᾽, εἰ παροῦσα πλησία
ἔλευσσες οἷ᾽ ἔδρασε, κάρτ᾽ ἂν ᾤκτισας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

καὶ ταῦτ᾽ ἔτλη τις χεὶρ γυναικεία κτίσαι;

ΤΡΟΦΟΣ

δεινῶς γε· πεύσει δ᾽, ὥστε μαρτυρεῖν ἐμοί.
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἦλθε δωμάτων εἴσω μόνη 900
καὶ παῖδ᾽ ἐν αὐλαῖς εἶδε κοῖλα δέμνια
στορνύνθ᾽, ὅπως ἄψορρον ἀντῴη πατρί,
κρύψασ᾽ ἑαυτὴν ἔνθα μή τις εἰσίδοι,
βρυχᾶτο μὲν βωμοῖσι προσπίπτουσ᾽ ὅτι
γένοιντ᾽ ἔρημοι, ᾽κλαιε δ᾽ ὀργάνων ὅτου
ψαύσειεν οἷς ἐχρῆτο δειλαία πάρος·
ἄλλῃ δὲ κἄλλῃ δωμάτων στρωφωμένη,

CHORUS

Saw'st thou the horror, beldam?

NURSE

I saw it; I was standing at her side

CHORUS

Saw what? what did she? speak!

NURSE

Herself upon herself she did the deed.

CHORUS

What dost thou say?

NURSE

Plain truth.

CHORUS

Verily this new bride
Hath borne, as the fruit of her womb,
A curse, a curse to the house.

NURSE

Too true; and had you been at hand to see,
The pity of it would have touched you more.

CHORUS

Could woman's hand perform so bold a deed!

NURSE

'Twas passing strange, but when ye hear the tale
Ye'll bear me out.
She went indoors alone,
And in the court she came upon her son
Preparing a deep litter wherewithal
To bear his sire back. Seeing him she fled,
And, crouching by the altar out of sight,
She groaned aloud, "O altars desolate!"
Then each familiar chattel in the house
She fingered tenderly, poor wretch, and wept.
Then roaming through the palace, up and down,

εἴ του φίλων βλέψειεν οἰκετῶν δέμας,
ἔκλαιεν ἡ δύστηνος εἰσορωμένη,
αὐτὴ τὸν αὑτῆς δαίμον' ἀνακαλουμένη — 910
καὶ τὰς ἄπαιδας ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν οὐσίας.[1]
ἐπεὶ δὲ τῶνδ' ἔληξεν, ἐξαίφνης σφ' ὁρῶ
τὸν Ἡράκλειον θάλαμον εἰσορμωμένην.
κἀγὼ λαθραῖον ὄμμ' ἐπεσκιασμένη
φρούρουν· ὁρῶ δὲ τὴν γυναῖκα δεμνίοις
τοῖς Ἡρακλείοις στρωτὰ βάλλουσαν φάρη.
ὅπως δ' ἐτέλεσε τοῦτ', ἐπενθοροῦσ' ἄνω
καθέζετ' ἐν μέσοισιν εὐνατηρίοις,
καὶ δακρύων ῥήξασα θερμὰ νάματα
ἔλεξεν· ὦ λέχη τε καὶ νυμφεῖ' ἐμά, — 920
τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη χαίρεθ', ὡς ἔμ' οὔποτε
δέξεσθ' ἔτ' ἐν κοίταισι ταῖσδ' εὐνάτριαν.
τοσαῦτα φωνήσασα συντόνῳ χερὶ
λύει τὸν αὑτῆς πέπλον, ᾗ[2] χρυσήλατος
προὔκειτο μαστῶν περονίς, ἐκ δ' ἐλώπισεν
πλευρὰν ἅπασαν ὠλένην τ' εὐώνυμον.
κἀγὼ δρομαία βᾶσ', ὅσονπερ ἔσθενον,
τῷ παιδὶ φράζω τῆς τεχνωμένης τάδε.
κἀν ᾧ τὸ κεῖσε δεῦρό τ' ἐξορμώμεθα,
ὁρῶμεν αὐτὴν ἀμφιπλῆγι φασγάνῳ — 930
πλευρὰν ὑφ' ἧπαρ καὶ φρένας πεπληγμένην.
ἰδὼν δ' ὁ παῖς ᾤμωξεν· ἔγνω γὰρ τάλας
τοὔργον κατ' ὀργὴν ὡς ἐφάψειεν τόδε,
ὄψ' ἐκδιδαχθεὶς τῶν κατ' οἶκον οὕνεκα
ἄκουσα πρὸς τοῦ θηρὸς ἔρξειεν τάδε.
κἀνταῦθ' ὁ παῖς δύστηνος οὔτ' ὀδυρμάτων

[1] The line is corrupt. The translation follows Jebb's conjecture, καὶ τῆς ἐπ' ἄλλοις ἐς τὸ λοιπὸν οὐσίας.
[2] ᾧ MSS., Wakefield corr.

As one or other of her maids she met,
She gazed upon her long and wept again,
Bewailing her own fortunes and the house
Henceforth condemned to serve an alien lord.
Then she was silent, and I saw her speed
Within the bed chamber of Heracles.
I from a coign of spial, unobserved
Watched, and I saw her snatch a coverpane
And fling it on the bed of Heracles.
That done, she leapt upon it, sat her down
And loosed the floodgate of hot tears and spake:
"O bridal bed and chamber, fare ye well,
A long farewell; never again shall ye
Lap me to slumber in your soft embrace!"
That was her last word; with a sudden wrench
She tore the gold-wrought brooch above her breast
And laid her left arm and her side all bare.
I ran at once, as fast as age allowed,
In haste to warn the son of her intent.
Alack! between my going and return,
In that brief space, she had driven a two-edged sword
Home through the midriff to the very heart.
He saw and shrieked heart-stricken at the sight,
Knowing his wrath had goaded her to death.
For all too late from those about the queen
He learned that she in utter innocence
Had done according to the Centaur's word.
Since then, poor boy, his misery has no end:

ἐλείπετ᾽ οὐδέν, ἀμφί νιν γοώμενος,
οὔτ᾽ ἀμφιπίπτων στόμασιν, ἀλλὰ πλευρόθεν
πλευρὰν παρεὶς ἔκειτο πόλλ᾽ ἀναστένων,
ὥς νιν ματαίως αἰτίᾳ βάλοι κακῇ, 940
κλαίων ὁθούνεκ᾽ ἐκ δυοῖν ἔσοιθ᾽ ἅμα,
πατρός τ᾽ ἐκείνης τ᾽, ὠρφανισμένος βίον.
τοιαῦτα τἀνθάδ᾽ ἐστίν· ὥστ᾽ εἴ τις δύο
ἢ καί τι πλείους[1] ἡμέρας λογίζεται,
μάταιός ἐστιν· οὐ γὰρ ἔσθ᾽ ἥ γ᾽ αὔριον,
πρὶν εὖ πάθῃ τις τὴν παροῦσαν ἡμέραν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πότερα πρότερον ἐπιστένω, στρ. α´
πότερα μέλεα[2] περαιτέρω,
δύσκριτ᾽ ἔμοιγε δυστάνῳ.

τάδε μὲν ἔχομεν ὁρᾶν δόμοις, ἀντ. α´ 950
τάδε δὲ μένομεν ἐπ᾽ ἐλπίσιν·
κοινὰ δ᾽ ἔχειν τε καὶ μέλλειν.

εἴθ᾽ ἀνεμόεσσά τις στρ. β´
γένοιτ᾽ ἔπουρος ἑστιῶτις αὔρα,
ἥτις μ᾽ ἀποικίσειεν ἐκ τόπων, ὅπως
τὸν Δῖον[3] ἄλκιμον γόνον
μὴ ταρβαλέα θάνοιμι 960
μοῦνον εἰσιδοῦσ᾽ ἄφαρ·
ἐπεὶ ἐν δυσαπαλλάκτοις ὀδύναις
χωρεῖν πρὸ δόμων λέγουσιν
ἄσπετόν τι θαῦμα.

ἀγχοῦ δ᾽ ἄρα κοὐ μακρὰν ἀντ. β´
προὔκλαιον, ὀξύφωνος ὡς ἀηδών.

[1] καὶ πλείους τις MSS., Dindorf corr.
[2] τέλεα MSS., Musgrave corr. [3] διὸς MSS., Nauck corr.

He mourned for her with sighs and sobs and groans,
He kissed her lips, he clasped her in his arms,
And prone beside her railed against himself:
"By my foul slander have I stricken her,"
He cried, "and now am I bereaved of both,
Of father and of mother, in one day."
So fares it with us. And if any man
Counts on the morrow, or on morrows more,
He reckons rashly. Morrow is there none,
Until to-day its course has safely run.

CHORUS

Which first of woes, which next, (*Str.* 1)
Wherewith my soul is vext,
To wail, I am perplext;

One here accomplishèd, (*Ant.* 1)
One hanging o'er my head,
One as the other dread.

O that a gale might suddenly upspring (*Str.* 2)
To waft me out of sight,
Lest when the Zeus-born hero home they bring,
I die of panic fright.
E'en now, they say, in pains no leech can quell,
Home is he borne, O piteous spectacle!

Ah, not far off, but nigh, (*Ant.* 2)
The woe that stirred my cry,
A boding wail
As of some shrill-voiced nightingale.

ξένων γὰρ ἐξόμιλος ἥδε τις βάσις.
πᾷ δ' αὖ φορεῖ νιν; ὡς φίλου
προκηδομένα βαρεῖαν
ἄψοφον φέρει βάσιν.
αἰαῖ, ὅδ' ἀναύδατος φέρεται.
τί χρὴ θανόντα νιν ἢ καθ' 970
ὕπνον ὄντα κρῖναι;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ,
πάτερ, οἴμοι ἐγὼ σοῦ μέλεος.
τί πάθω; τί δὲ μήσομαι; οἴμοι.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

σίγα, τέκνον, μὴ κινήσῃς
ἀγρίαν ὀδύνην πατρὸς ὠμόφρονος·
ζῇ γὰρ προπετής· ἀλλ' ἴσχε δακὼν
στόμα σόν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

πῶς φής, γέρον; ἦ ζῇ;

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

οὐ μὴ 'ξεγερεῖς τὸν ὕπνῳ κάτοχον
κἀκκινήσεις κἀναστήσεις
φοιτάδα δεινὴν 980
νόσον, ὦ τέκνον.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐπί μοι μελέῳ
βάρος ἄπλετον· ἐμμέμονεν φρήν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ,
ποῖ γᾶς ἥκω; παρὰ τοῖσι βροτῶν
κεῖμαι πεπονημένος ἀλλήκτοις
ὀδύναις; οἴμοι μοι[1] ἐγὼ τλάμων·
ἡ δ' αὖ μιαρὰ βρύκει. φεῦ.

[1] Brunck adds μοι.

Lo a foreign train appear,
And they move with muffled tread,
Mute as bearers of a bier.
Is it sleep, or is he dead?

Enter HYLLUS, *an* OLD MAN, *and* ATTENDANTS *bearing* HERACLES *on a litter.*

HYLLUS

Ah woe is me,
Woe, father, woe for thee!
Alack! I am undone,
Help know I none.

OLD MAN

Hush, son, lest thou awake
The intolerable ache.
He lives, though nigh to death;
Hold hard thy breath.

HYLLUS

What, is he still alive?

OLD MAN

Hush, hush, lest thou revive
And waken from its fitful rest
The plague that racks his breast.

HYLLUS

Beneath this weight of misery
My spirit sinks; it maddens me.

HERACLES

O Zeus, where am I? who
These strangers standing by,
As tortured here I lie?
Ah me! the foul fiend gnaws anew.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ἆρ' ἐξήδη σ' ὅσον ἦν κέρδος
σιγῇ κεύθειν καὶ μὴ σκεδάσαι
τῷδ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς 990
βλεφάρων θ' ὕπνον;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οὐ γὰρ ἔχω πῶς ἂν
στέρξαιμι κακὸν τόδε λεύσσων.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ Κηναία κρηπὶς βωμῶν,
ἱερῶν οἵαν οἵων ἐπί μοι
μελέῳ χάριν ἠνύσω· ὦ Ζεῦ.
οἵαν μ' ἄρ' ἔθου λώβαν, οἵαν·
ἣν μή ποτ' ἐγὼ προσιδεῖν ὁ τάλας
ὤφελον ὄσσοις, τόδ' ἀκήλητον
μανίας ἄνθος καταδερχθῆναι.
τίς γὰρ ἀοιδός, τίς ὁ χειροτέχνης 1000
ἰατορίας, ὃς τήνδ' ἄτην
χωρὶς Ζηνὸς κατακηλήσει;
θαῦμ' ἂν πόρρωθεν ἰδοίμην.

ἒ ἔ, στρ. α'
ἐᾶτέ μ', ἐᾶτέ με δύσμορον ὕστατον,
ἐᾶθ' ὕστατον εὐνᾶσθαι.[1]

πᾷ πᾷ μου ψαύεις; ποῖ κλίνεις; στρ. β
ἀπολεῖς μ', ἀπολεῖς.
ἀνατέτροφας ὅ τι καὶ μύσῃ.
ἧπταί μου, τοτοτοῖ, ἥδ' αὖθ' ἕρπει. πόθεν ἔστ', ὦ 1010
πάντων Ἑλλάνων ἀδικώτατοι ἀνέρες, οὓς δὴ

[1] ἐᾶτέ με δύστανον εὐνάσαι MSS., Wunder corr.

OLD MAN

Did I not bid thee keep
Silence, nor scare the sleep
That over eyes and head
Awhile like balm was spread?

HYLLUS

Nay, how can I refrain
At sight of such grim pain?

HERACLES

O altar on Cenaean height,
How ill dost thou requite
My sacrifice and offerings!
O Zeus, thy worship ruin brings.
Accursed headland, would that ne'er
My eyes had seen thine altar-stair!
So had I 'scaped this frenzied rage
No incantation can assuage.
Where is the charmer, where the leech,
Whose art a remedy could teach,
Save Zeus alone? If one could tell
Of such a wizard, 'twere a miracle.

O leave me, let me lie (*Str.* 1)
In my last agony!

Ye touch me? have a care! (*Str.* 2)
Would turn me? O forbear!
To agony ye wake
The slumbering ache.
Once more it has me in its grip, the fiend comes on apace.
O Greeks, if ye be Greeks indeed, most faithless of your race!

πολλὰ μὲν ἐν πόντῳ κατά τε δρία πάντα καθαίρων
ὠλεκόμαν ὁ τάλας, καὶ νῦν ἐπὶ τῷδε νοσοῦντι
οὐ πῦρ, οὐκ ἔγχος τις ὀνήσιμον οὐκ ἐπιτρέψει;

ἒ ἔ, ἀντ. α´
οὐδ' ἀπαράξαι κρᾶτα βίᾳ[1] θέλει
μολὼν τοῦ στυγεροῦ; φεῦ φεῦ.

ΠΡΕΣΒΥΣ

ὦ παῖ τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, τοὔργον τόδε μεῖζον ἀνήκει
ἢ κατ' ἐμὰν ῥώμαν· σὺ δὲ σύλλαβε. σοὶ γὰρ
ἑτοίμα
ἐς πλέον ἢ δι' ἐμοῦ σῴζειν.[2]

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ψαύω μὲν ἔγωγε, 1020
λαθίπονον δ' ὀδυνᾶν οὔτ' ἔνδοθεν οὔτε θύραθεν
ἔστι μοι ἐξανύσαι βίοτον· τοιαῦτα νέμει Ζεύς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ παῖ, ποῦ ποτ' εἶ; τᾷδέ με τᾷδέ με στρ. γ´
πρόσλαβε κουφίσας. ἒ ἔ, ἰὼ δαῖμον.

θρῴσκει δ' αὖ, θρῴσκει δειλαία ἀντ. β´
διολοῦσ' ἡμᾶς
ἀποτίβατος ἀγρία νόσος. 1030

ὦ Παλλὰς Παλλάς, τόδε μ' αὖ λωβᾶται. ἰὼ παῖ,
τὸν φύτορ' οἰκτίρας, ἀνεπίφθονον εἴρυσον ἔγχος,
παῖσον ἐμᾶς ὑπὸ κλῇδος· ἀκοῦ δ' ἄχος, ᾧ μ'
ἐχόλωσεν
σὰ μάτηρ ἄθεος, τὰν ὧδ' ἐπίδοιμι πεσοῦσαν
αὔτως, ὧδ' αὔτως ὥς μ' ὤλεσεν. ὦ γλυκὺς Ἅιδας, 1040

[1] βίου MSS., Wakefield corr.
[2] σοί τε γὰρ ὄμμα ἔμπλεον MSS., Jebb corr.

For you I laboured hugely and spent myself, to free
Your land from ravening beasts of prey and monsters of the sea;
And now in long drawn agony ye leave me to expire.
Will none of you deliver me with sword or kindly fire?

Would God that I were dead! (*Ant.* 1)
Will no man sever at a stroke this head?

OLD MAN

O help me, son of Heracles, for I am all too frail
To ease him; if thou lend thine aid, perchance we may prevail.

HYLLUS

That will I, but nor thou nor I can rid him of the pain
That haunts him to the very end. Such doom the gods ordain.

HERACLES

(*Str.* 3)
My son, where art thou? Raise me, hold me here, here! (*Ant.* 2)
Ah me! once more the pest doth leap
Upon me and its fangs bite deep.

Pallas! 'tis torture. O for pity save
Thy father; son, unsheath an innocent glaive,
Pierce thy sire's heart and so the wild pain cure
That from thine impious mother I endure.
Thus may I see her die, like mine her end!

ἀντ. γʹ

ὦ Διὸς αὐθαίμων, εὔνασον εὔνασον μ'
ὠκυπέτᾳ μόρῳ τὸν μέλεον φθίσας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

κλύουσ' ἔφριξα τάσδε συμφοράς, φίλαι,
ἄνακτος, οἵαις οἷος ὢν ἐλαύνεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ πολλὰ δὴ καὶ θερμὰ κοὐ λόγῳ[1] κακὰ
καὶ χερσὶ καὶ νώτοισι μοχθήσας ἐγώ·
κοὔπω τοιοῦτον οὔτ' ἄκοιτις ἡ Διὸς
προὔθηκεν οὔθ' ὁ στυγνὸς Εὐρυσθεὺς ἐμοί,
οἷον τόδ' ἡ δολῶπις Οἰνέως κόρη 1050
καθῆψεν ὤμοις τοῖς ἐμοῖς Ἐρινύων
ὑφαντὸν ἀμφίβληστρον, ᾧ διόλλυμαι.
πλευραῖσι γὰρ προσμαχθὲν ἐκ μὲν ἐσχάτας
βέβρωκε σάρκας, πλεύμονός τ' ἀρτηρίας
ῥοφεῖ ξυνοικοῦν, ἐκ δὲ χλωρὸν αἷμά μου
πέπωκεν ἤδη, καὶ διέφθαρμαι δέμας
τὸ πᾶν, ἀφράστῳ τῇδε χειρωθεὶς πέδῃ.
κοὐ ταῦτα λόγχη πεδιάς, οὔθ' ὁ γηγενὴς
στρατὸς Γιγάντων οὔτε θήρειος βία,
οὔθ' Ἑλλὰς οὔτ' ἄγλωσσος οὔθ' ὅσην ἐγὼ 1060
γαῖαν καθαίρων ἱκόμην, ἔδρασέ πω·
γυνὴ δέ, θῆλυς φῦσα[2] κοὐκ ἀνδρὸς φύσιν,
μόνη με δὴ καθεῖλε φασγάνου δίχα.
ὦ παῖ, γενοῦ μοι παῖς ἐτήτυμος γεγώς,
καὶ μὴ τὸ μητρὸς ὄνομα πρεσβεύσῃς πλέον.
δός μοι χεροῖν σαῖν αὐτὸς ἐξ οἴκου λαβὼν
ἐς χεῖρα τὴν τεκοῦσαν, ὡς εἰδῶ σάφα
εἰ τοὐμὸν ἀλγεῖς μᾶλλον ἢ κείνης ὁρῶν
λωβητὸν εἶδος ἐν δίκῃ κακούμενον.
ἴθ', ὦ τέκνον, τόλμησον· οἴκτιρόν τέ με 1070

[1] καὶ λόγῳ MSS., Bothe corr. [2] οὖσα MSS., Nauck corr.

(*Ant.* 3)

Brother of Zeus, kind Death, be now my friend;
Lay me to rest and swift deliverance send.

CHORUS

I shudder, friends, to hear this woful plaint.
How great a hero, and how ill bestead!

HERACLES

Many and grievous, not in name alone,
The toils and burdens of these hands, these loins.
Yet trial like to this was never set me
By Heaven's Queen or grim Eurystheus' hate,
Such as the child of Oeneus, false and fair,
Hath fastened on my back, this hellish net
She wove to snare me, in whose coils I die.
It hugs me close, it eats into my flesh,
It sucks the channels of my breath, hath drained
My life-blood, and my whole frame wastes and withers,
Fast locked in these unutterable bonds.
And this my fall no warrior's lance hath wrought
Nor Giant's earth-born brood, nor savage beast,
Nor Grecian nor barbarian, nor the lands
Whither I fared to rid them of their pests;
No, but a woman, weak as all her sex,
Hath quelled me, single-handed and unarmed.
Son, show thyself thy father's son in deed,
Mine, not thy mother's—mother in name alone.
Hale her thyself, hand her thyself to me,
The wretch, that when she meets her righteous doom
I may make trial which sight moves thee more,
A mother's or a father's agony.
For pity's sake shrink not; to see me thus

πολλοῖσιν οἰκτρόν, ὅστις ὥστε παρθένος
βέβρυχα κλαίων, καὶ τόδ' οὐδ' ἂν εἷς ποτε
τόνδ' ἄνδρα φαίη πρόσθ' ἰδεῖν δεδρακότα,
ἀλλ' ἀστένακτος αἰὲν εἱπόμην κακοῖς.
νῦν δ' ἐκ τοιούτου θῆλυς ηὕρημαι τάλας.
καὶ νῦν προσελθὼν στῆθι πλησίον πατρός,
σκέψαι θ' ὁποίας ταῦτα συμφορᾶς ὕπο
πέπονθα· δείξω γὰρ τάδ' ἐκ καλυμμάτων.
ἰδού, θεᾶσθε πάντες ἄθλιον δέμας,
ὁρᾶτε τὸν δύστηνον, ὡς οἰκτρῶς ἔχω. 1080
αἰαῖ, ὢ τάλας,
ἔθαλψεν ἄτης σπασμὸς ἀρτίως ὅδ' αὖ,
διῇξε πλευρῶν, οὐδ' ἀγύμναστόν μ' ἐᾶν
ἔοικεν ἡ τάλαινα διάβορος νόσος.
ὦναξ Ἀίδη, δέξαι μ',
ὦ Διὸς ἀκτίς, παῖσον,
ἔνσεισον, ὦναξ, ἐγκατάσκηψον βέλος,
πάτερ, κεραυνοῦ· δαίνυται γὰρ αὖ πάλιν,
ἤνθηκεν, ἐξώρμηκειν. ὦ χέρες χέρες,
ὦ νῶτα καὶ στέρν', ὦ φίλοι βραχίονες, 1090
ὑμεῖς δὲ κεῖνοι δὴ καθέσταθ', οἵ ποτε
Νεμέας ἔνοικον, βουκόλων ἀλάστορα
λέοντ', ἄπλατον θρέμμα κἀπροσήγορον,
βίᾳ κατειργάσασθε, Λερναίαν θ' ὕδραν,
διφυῆ τ' ἄμικτον ἱπποβάμονα στρατὸν
θηρῶν, ὑβριστὴν ἄνομον, ὑπέροχον βίαν,
Ἐρυμάνθιόν τε θῆρα, τόν θ' ὑπὸ χθονὸς
Ἅιδου τρίκρανον σκύλακ', ἀπρόσμαχον τέρας,
δεινῆς Ἐχίδνης θρέμμα, τόν τε χρυσέων
δράκοντα μήλων φύλακ' ἐπ' ἐσχάτοις τόποις. 1100
ἄλλων τε μόχθων μυρίων ἐγευσάμην,
κοὐδεὶς τροπαῖ' ἔστησε τῶν ἐμῶν χερῶν.

('Twould move to pity e'en a heart of stone)
Puling and weeping like a girl, unmanned.
So none can boast to have seen me, for till now
I took whate'er befell me with a smile.
And now—'tis I who play the woman now.
Come closer, stand beside me; see, my son,
To what a pass ill fate hath brought thy sire.
Lo, I will lift the veil; look all of you
On this poor maimèd body, and declare
Was ever wretch so piteous as I.
Ah me!
Again the deadly spasm; it shoots and burns
Through all my vitals. Will it never end,
This struggle with the never-dying worm?
Lord of the Dead, receive me!
Smite me, O fire of Zeus!
Hurl, Father, on my head thy crashing bolt!
Again it burgeons, blossoms, blazes forth,
The all-consuming plague.
O hands, my hands,
Arms, breast and shoulders, once all puissant,
Are ye the same whose thews of old subdued
The scourge of herdsmen in his savage lair,
The Nemean lion, a beast untamable;
Slew the Lenaean hydra; overcame
That twy-form multitude, half man, half horse,
Rude, lawless, savage, unapproachable,
Unmatched in might; and the Erymanthian boar;
Tamed in the nether world the monstrous whelp
Of dread Echidna, the three-headed hound
Of Hades, and the dragon-guard who watched
The golden apples at the world's far end.
These were my toils, and others manifold,
And none could ever boast of my defeat.

νῦν δ' ὧδ' ἄναρθρος καὶ κατερρακωμένος
τυφλῆς ὑπ' ἄτης ἐκπεπόρθημαι τάλας,
ὁ τῆς ἀρίστης μητρὸς ὠνομασμένος,
ὁ τοῦ κατ' ἄστρα Ζηνὸς αὐδηθεὶς γόνος.
ἀλλ' εὖ γέ τοι τόδ' ἴστε, κἂν τὸ μηδὲν ὦ
κἂν μηδὲν ἕρπω, τήν γε δράσασαν τάδε
χειρώσομαι κἀκ τῶνδε· προσμόλοι μόνον,
ἵν' ἐκδιδαχθῇ πᾶσιν ἀγγέλλειν ὅτι 1110
καὶ ζῶν κακούς γε καὶ θανὼν ἐτισάμην.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὦ τλῆμον Ἑλλάς, πένθος οἷον εἰσορῶ
ἕξουσαν, ἀνδρὸς τοῦδέ γ' εἰ σφαλήσεται.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἐπεὶ παρέσχες ἀντιφωνῆσαι, πάτερ,
σιγὴν παρασχὼν κλῦθί μου, νοσῶν ὅμως·
αἰτήσομαι γάρ σ' ὧν δίκαια τυγχάνειν.
δός μοι σεαυτόν, μὴ τοσοῦτον ὡς δάκνει
θυμῷ δύσοργος· οὐ γὰρ ἂν γνοίης ἐν οἷς
χαίρειν προθυμεῖ κἀν ὅτοις ἀλγεῖς μάτην.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰπὼν ὃ χρῄζεις λῆξον· ὡς ἐγὼ νοσῶν 1120
οὐδὲν ξυνίημ' ὧν σὺ ποικίλλεις πάλαι.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

τῆς μητρὸς ἥκω τῆς ἐμῆς φράσων ἐν οἷς
νῦν ἐστιν ὥς θ' ἥμαρτεν οὐχ ἑκουσία.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὦ παγκάκιστε, καὶ παρεμνήσω γὰρ αὖ
τῆς πατροφόντου μητρός, ὡς κλύειν ἐμέ;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἔχει γὰρ οὕτως ὥστε μὴ σιγᾶν πρέπειν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δῆτα τοῖς γε πρόσθεν ἡμαρτημένοις.

Now out of joint, a thing of shreds I lie
Baffled by hands invisible, I who claim
A mother of the noblest, and for sire
The ruler of the starry heavens, Zeus.
But of one thing be sure, though I am naught
And cannot stir a step, yet even thus
I am a match for her who wrought my woe.
Let her but come that she may learn of me
This lesson to repeat to all, that I
Living and dying chastened all that's vile.

CHORUS

O hapless Greece, what mourning will be thine,
If thou must lose thy mightiest warrior?

HYLLUS

O father, since thy silence seems to invite
An answer, hear me, stricken though thou art.
I shall but ask what's fair; O be again
Thy true self, not by pain and rage distraught;
Else wilt thou never learn how vain thy thirst
For vengeance, how unjust thy bitterness.

HERACLES

Say what thou wilt and end; I am too sick
To catch the drift of all thy riddling words.

HYLLUS

'Tis of my mother I would tell thee—how
She fares, and how unwittingly she sinned.

HERACLES

O shameless reprobate, thou dar'st to name
Thy father's murderess, name her too to me?

HYLLUS

Her case is such that silence were unmeet.

HERACLES

Of her past misdeeds it was meet to speak.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲ μὲν δὴ τοῖς γ' ἐφ' ἡμέραν ἐρεῖς.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

λέγ', εὐλαβοῦ δὲ μὴ φανῇς κακὸς γεγώς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

λέγω· τέθνηκεν ἀρτίως νεοσφαγής. 1130

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

πρὸς τοῦ; τέρας τοι διὰ κακῶν ἐθέσπισας.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

αὐτὴ πρὸς αὑτῆς, οὐδενὸς πρὸς ἐκτόπου.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἴμοι· πρὶν ὡς χρῆν σφ' ἐξ ἐμῆς θανεῖν χερός;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

κἂν σοῦ στραφείη θυμός, εἰ τὸ πᾶν μάθοις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

δεινοῦ λόγου κατῆρξας· εἰπὲ δ' ᾗ νοεῖς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἅπαν τὸ χρῆμ', ἥμαρτε χρηστὰ μωμένη.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

χρήστ', ὦ κάκιστε, πατέρα σὸν κτείνασα δρᾷ;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

στέργημα γὰρ δοκοῦσα προσβαλεῖν σέθεν
ἀπήμπλαχ', ὡς προσεῖδε τοὺς ἔνδον γάμους.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καὶ τίς τοσοῦτος φαρμακεὺς Τραχινίων; 1140

ΥΛΛΟΣ

Νέσσος πάλαι Κένταυρος ἐξέπεισέ νιν
τοιῷδε φίλτρῳ τὸν σὸν ἐκμῆναι πόθον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἰοὺ ἰοὺ δύστηνος, οἴχομαι τάλας·
ὄλωλ' ὄλωλα, φέγγος οὐκέτ' ἔστι μοι.

HYLLUS

And of her deeds this day, as thou wilt own.

HERACLES

Speak, but I fear thy speech will prove thee base.

HYLLUS

Hear then. She is dead, slain but an hour agone.

HERACLES

By whom? this portent likes me not; 'tis strange.

HYLLUS

By her own hand, none other, was she slain.

HERACLES

Out on her! she hath baulked my just revenge.

HYLLUS

E'en thou wouldst soften if thou knewest all.

HERACLES

A wondrous prologue! make thy meaning plain.

HYLLUS

The sum is this: she erred with good intent.

HERACLES

"Good," say'st thou, wretch? Was it good to slay
thy sire?

HYLLUS

Nay, when she saw thy new bride, she devised
A charm to win thee back, but was misled.

HERACLES

Could Trachis boast a wizard of such might?

HYLLUS

The Centaur Nessus taught her long ago
How to enkindle in thy heart love's flame.

HERACLES

Alas, alas! I am undone, undone,
The light of day has left me; now I see

οἴμοι, φρονῶ δὴ ξυμφορᾶς ἵν' ἕσταμεν.
ἴθ', ὦ τέκνον, πατὴρ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ἔστι σοι·
κάλει τὸ πᾶν μοι σπέρμα σῶν ὁμαιμόνων,
κάλει δὲ τὴν τάλαιναν Ἀλκμήνην, Διὸς
μάτην ἄκοιτιν, ὡς τελευταίαν ἐμοῦ
φήμην πύθησθε θεσφάτων ὅσ' οἶδ' ἐγώ. 1150

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὔτε μήτηρ ἐνθάδ', ἀλλ' ἐπακτίᾳ
Τίρυνθι συμβέβηκεν ὥστ' ἔχειν ἕδραν.
παίδων δὲ τοὺς μὲν ξυλλαβοῦσ' αὐτὴ τρέφει,
τοὺς δ' ἂν τὸ Θήβης ἄστυ ναίοντας μάθοις·
ἡμεῖς δ' ὅσοι πάρεσμεν, εἴ τι χρή, πάτερ,
πράσσειν, κλύοντες ἐξυπηρετήσομεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σὺ δ' οὖν ἄκουε τοὔργον· ἐξήκεις δ' ἵνα
φανεῖς ὁποῖος ὢν ἀνὴρ ἐμὸς καλεῖ.
ἐμοὶ γὰρ ἦν πρόφαντον ἐκ πατρὸς πάλαι,
τῶν ἐμπνεόντων[1] μηδενὸς θανεῖν ὕπο, 1160
ἀλλ' ὅστις Ἅιδου φθίμενος οἰκήτωρ πέλοι.
ὅδ' οὖν ὁ θὴρ Κένταυρος, ὡς τὸ θεῖον ἦν
πρόφαντον, οὕτω ζῶντά μ' ἔκτεινεν θανών.
φανῶ δ' ἐγὼ τούτοισι συμβαίνοντ' ἴσα
μαντεῖα καινά, τοῖς πάλαι ξυνήγορα,
ἃ τῶν ὀρείων καὶ χαμαικοιτῶν ἐγὼ
Σελλῶν ἐσελθὼν ἄλσος εἰσεγραψάμην
πρὸς τῆς πατρῴας καὶ πολυγλώσσου δρυός,
ἥ μοι χρόνῳ τῷ ζῶντι καὶ παρόντι νῦν
ἔφασκε μόχθων τῶν ἐφεστώτων ἐμοὶ 1170
λύσιν τελεῖσθαι· κἀδόκουν πράξειν καλῶς.
τὸ δ' ἦν ἄρ' οὐδὲν ἄλλο πλὴν θανεῖν ἐμέ.
τοῖς γὰρ θανοῦσι μόχθος οὐ προσγίγνεται.

[1] πρὸς τῶν πνεόντων MSS., Erfurdt corr.

In what extremity of fate I stand.
Go, son, thy father is no more ; go summon
Thy brethren one and all, go summon too
Alcmena, bride of Zeus—an empty name—
That from my dying lips ye all may learn
What oracles I know.

HYLLUS

I cannot call
Thy mother; she at Tiryns by the sea
Far hence abides ; and of thy children some
She took to live with her ; others at Thebes,
As thou may'st learn, are lodged ; but all of us
Here present, father, will obey thy hest.

HERACLES

Then listen thou and heed me. Now's the hour
To prove thy breed—if thou art rightly called
My son. It was foreshown me by my sire
That I should perish by no living wight,
But by a dweller in the realms of Death.
So by this Centaur beast, as was foretold,
I perish, I the living by the dead.
A later oracle, as thou shalt learn,
Meets and confirms the ancient prophecy.
'Twas in the grove whose priests, the Selli, make
The earth their bed, rude hillsmen, that I heard it
Breathed by my Father's oak of many tongues ;
Heard it, and wrote it down, my present doom,
Now at this living moment brought to pass.
Release it promised from my toils, and I
Augured a happy life, but it meant death,
For with the dead there can be no more toil.

ταῦτ᾽ οὖν ἐπειδὴ λαμπρὰ συμβαίνει, τέκνον,
δεῖ σ᾽ αὖ γενέσθαι τῷδε τἀνδρὶ σύμμαχον
καὶ μὴ 'πιμεῖναι τοὐμὸν ὀξῦναι στόμα,
ἀλλ᾽ αὐτὸν εἰκαθόντα συμπράσσειν, νόμον
κάλλιστον ἐξευρόντα, πειθαρχεῖν πατρί.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ᾽, ὦ πάτερ, ταρβῶ μὲν εἰς λόγου στάσιν
τοιάνδ᾽ ἐπελθών, πείσομαι δ᾽ ἅ σοι δοκεῖ. 1180

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔμβαλλε χεῖρα δεξιὰν πρώτιστά μοι·

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὡς πρὸς τί πίστιν τήνδ᾽ ἄγαν ἐπιστρέφεις;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ θᾶσσον οἴσεις μηδ᾽ ἀπιστήσεις ἐμοί;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἰδοὺ προτείνω, κοὐδὲν ἀντειρήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὄμνυ Διός νυν τοῦ με φύσαντος κάρα,

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἦ μὴν τί δράσειν; καὶ τόδ᾽ ἐξειρήσεται;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἦ μὴν ἐμοὶ τὸ λεχθὲν ἔργον ἐκτελεῖν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὄμνυμ᾽ ἔγωγε, Ζῆν᾽ ἔχων ἐπώμοτον.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

εἰ δ᾽ ἐκτὸς ἔλθοις, πημονὰς εὔχου λαβεῖν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οὐ μὴ λάβω· δράσω γάρ· εὔχομαι δ᾽ ὅμως· 1190

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οἶσθ᾽ οὖν τὸν Οἴτης Ζηνὸς ὕψιστον πάγον;

Since, then, my weird thus plainly comes to pass,
Thou, son, must do thy part and lend thine aid.
Delay not till I goad thee in my wrath,
But aid me with a will as one who knows
The golden rule, a father to obey.

HYLLUS

Yea, father, though the issue gives me pause
And I misdoubt thy purport, I'll obey.

HERACLES

Well said, but first lay thy right hand in mine.

HYLLUS

Wherefore impose on me this needless pledge?

HERACLES

Thy hand at once; obey and argue not.

HYLLUS

Here is my hand; I do as I am bid.

HERACLES

Now by the head of Zeus my Father swear.

HYLLUS

What wouldst thou have me swear? May I not know?

HERACLES

Swear to perform the task that I enjoin.

HYLLUS

I will and take the oath, so help me Zeus.

HERACLES

And add thereto the curse on perjurers.

HYLLUS

No need, for I shall keep it; yet I will.

HERACLES

Thou know'st the peak of Oeta, shrine of Zeus?

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἶδ', ὡς θυτήρ γε πολλὰ δὴ σταθεὶς ἄνω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἐνταῦθά νυν χρὴ τοὐμὸν ἐξάραντά σε
σῶμ' αὐτόχειρα καὶ ξὺν οἷς χρῄζεις φίλων.
πολλὴν μὲν ὕλην τῆς βαθυρρίζου δρυὸς
κείραντα, πολλὸν δ' ἄρσεν' ἐκτεμόνθ' ὁμοῦ
ἄγριον ἔλαιον, σῶμα τοὐμὸν ἐμβαλεῖν,
καὶ πευκίνης λαβόντα λαμπάδος σέλας
πρῆσαι. γόου δὲ μηδὲν εἰσίτω δάκρυ,
ἀλλ' ἀστένακτος κἀδάκρυτος, εἴπερ εἶ 1200
τοῦδ' ἀνδρός, ἔρξον· εἰ δὲ μή, μενῶ σ' ἐγὼ
καὶ νέρθεν ὢν ἀραῖος εἰσαεὶ βαρύς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἴμοι, πάτερ, τί δ' εἶπας; οἷά μ' εἴργασαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὁποῖα δραστέ' ἐστίν· εἰ δὲ μή, πατρὸς
ἄλλου γενοῦ του μηδ' ἐμὸς κληθῇς ἔτι.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἴμοι μάλ' αὖθις, οἷά μ' ἐκκαλεῖ, πάτερ,
φονέα γενέσθαι καὶ παλαμναῖον σέθεν.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ὧν ἔχω παιώνιον
καὶ μοῦνον ἰατῆρα τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

καὶ πῶς ὑπαίθων σῶμ' ἂν ἰῴμην τὸ σόν; 1210

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ φοβεῖ πρὸς τοῦτο, τἄλλα γ' ἔργασαι.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

φορᾶς γέ τοι φθόνησις οὐ γενήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἦ καὶ πυρᾶς πλήρωμα τῆς εἰρημένης;

HYLLUS

Yea, I have climbed it oft to sacrifice.

HERACLES

Thither thyself, thou with what friends thou wilt,
Must carry me. From the deep-rooted oak
Lop many a branch, and many a faggot hew
From the wild-olive's lusty stock, and lay me
Upon the pyre. Kindle a torch of pine,
And fire it. Not a tear or wail or moan!
Unweeping, unlamenting must thou do
Thy part and prove thou art indeed my son.
Fail, and my ghost shall haunt thee ever more.

HYLLUS

O father, canst thou mean it? Hear I right?

HERACLES

Thou hast thy charge. If thou refuse it, get
Another sire, be called no more my son.

HYLLUS

O woe is me! What dost thou ask, that I
Should be thy murderer, a parricide?

HERACLES

Not so, but healer of my sufferings,
The one physician that can cure my pains.

HYLLUS

How can I heal thy stricken frame by fire?

HERACLES

Well, if thou shrink from this, perform the rest.

HYLLUS

The task of bearing thee I will not grudge.

HERACLES

Nor yet to heap the pyre, as I have bid?

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὅσον γ' ἂν αὐτὸς μὴ ποτιψαύων χεροῖν·
τὰ δ' ἄλλα πράξω κοὐ καμεῖ τοὐμὸν μέρος.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἀρκέσει καὶ ταῦτα· πρόσνειμαι δέ μοι
χάριν βραχεῖαν πρὸς μακροῖς ἄλλοις διδούς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

εἰ καὶ μακρὰ κάρτ' ἐστίν, ἐργασθήσεται.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

τὴν Εὐρυτείαν οἶσθα δῆτα παρθένον;

ΥΛΛΟΣ

Ἰόλην ἔλεξας, ὥς γ' ἐπεικάζειν ἐμέ. 1220

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔγνως. τοσοῦτον δή σ' ἐπισκήπτω, τέκνον·
ταύτην ἐμοῦ θανόντος, εἴπερ εὐσεβεῖν
βούλει, πατρῴων ὁρκίων μεμνημένος,
προσθοῦ δάμαρτα, μηδ' ἀπιστήσῃς πατρί·
μηδ' ἄλλος ἀνδρῶν τοῖς ἐμοῖς πλευροῖς ὁμοῦ
κλιθεῖσαν αὐτὴν ἀντὶ σοῦ λάβῃ[1] ποτέ,
ἀλλ' αὐτός, ὦ παῖ, τοῦτο κήδευσον λέχος.
πείθου· τὸ γάρ τοι μεγάλα πιστεύσαντ' ἐμοὶ
σμικροῖς ἀπιστεῖν τὴν πάρος συγχεῖ χάριν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

οἴμοι· τὸ μὲν νοσοῦντι θυμοῦσθαι κακόν, 1230
τὸ δ' ὧδ' ὁρᾶν φρονοῦντα τίς ποτ' ἂν φέροι;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ὡς ἐργασείων οὐδὲν ὧν λέγω θροεῖς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

τίς γάρ ποθ', ἥ μοι μητρὶ μὲν θανεῖν μόνη
μεταίτιος σοί τ' αὖθις ὡς ἔχεις ἔχειν,

[1] λάβοι MSS., Elmsley corr.

HYLLUS

So that I light it not with my own hands;
All else I will perform and do my part.

HERACLES

That will suffice. But add one other boon,
A little one, to crown the great ones given.

HYLLUS

It shall be granted, be it ne'er so great.

HERACLES

Thou know'st the maiden, child of Eurytus?

HYLLUS

Methinks thou meanest Iolè.

HERACLES

None else.
This is my charge to thee concerning her.
When I am dead, if thou wouldst keep the oath
Thou sworest to obey thy father's will,
Take her to wife, let not another have her
Who by my side hath lain; but thine, my son—
Thine let her be, joined in the marriage bond.
Much hast thou granted, to refuse one more,
One little boon, would cancel all the score.

HYLLUS

Ah me! 'tis ill to quarrel with one sick—
But who could bear to see him in this mind?

HERACLES

Thy murmuring augurs disobedience.

HYLLUS

What her, the sole cause of my mother's death,
And worse, the cause of this thy grievous plight!

τίς ταῦτ' ἄν, ὅστις μὴ 'ξ ἀλαστόρων νοσοῖ,
ἕλοιτο; κρεῖσσον κἀμέ γ', ὦ πάτερ, θανεῖν
ἢ τοῖσιν ἐχθίστοισι συνναίειν ὁμοῦ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἁνὴρ ὅδ', ὡς ἔοικεν, οὐ νεμεῖν ἐμοὶ
φθίνοντι μοῖραν· ἀλλά τοι θεῶν ἀρὰ
μενεῖ σ' ἀπιστήσαντα τοῖς ἐμοῖς λόγοις. 1240

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ὤμοι, τάχ', ὡς ἔοικας, ὡς νοσεῖς φράσεις.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

σὺ γάρ μ' ἀπ' εὐνασθέντος ἐκκινεῖς κακοῦ.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

δείλαιος, ὡς ἐς πολλὰ τἀπορεῖν ἔχω.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ γὰρ δικαιοῖς τοῦ φυτεύσαντος κλύειν.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐκδιδαχθῶ δῆτα δυσσεβεῖν, πάτερ;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

οὐ δυσσέβεια, τοὐμὸν εἰ τέρψεις κέαρ.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

πράσσειν ἄνωγας οὖν με πανδίκως τάδε;

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἔγωγε· τούτων μάρτυρας καλῶ θεούς.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

τοιγὰρ ποήσω κοὐκ ἀπώσομαι, τὸ σὸν
θεοῖσι δεικνὺς ἔργον· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε 1250
κακὸς φανείην σοί γε πιστεύσας, πάτερ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

καλῶς τελευτᾷς, κἀπὶ τοῖσδε τὴν χάριν
ταχεῖαν, ὦ παῖ, πρόσθες, ὡς πρὶν ἐμπεσεῖν
σπαραγμὸν ἤ τιν' οἶστρον, ἐς πυράν με θῇς.

Who, were he not possessed of fiends, would do it?
Better, my father, I with thee should die
Than live united with our direst foe.

HERACLES

The boy, it seems, is not inclined to heed
A father's dying prayer; but heaven's curse
Awaits full sure a disobedient son.

HYLLUS

I fear thy frenzy soon will show itself.

HERACLES

Yea, for thou wakenest my pain that slept.

HYLLUS

O what a coil of dread perplexities!

HERACLES

Because thou wilt not deign to heed thy sire.

HYLLUS

What, must I learn impiety from thee?

HERACLES

'Tis piety to glad a father's heart.

HYLLUS

I have thy warrant then for what I do?

HERACLES

I call the gods to witness it is just.

HYLLUS

Then I consent and hesitate no more.
Let heaven attest this act of thine, for I
Cannot be blamed for filial piety.

HERACLES

Thou endest well. Now crown thy gracious words
With action; haste and lay me on the pyre
Before the spasms and fever-fit return.

ἄγ' ἐγκονεῖτ', αἴρεσθε· παῦλά τοι κακῶν
αὕτη, τελευτὴ τοῦδε τἀνδρὸς ὑστάτη.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲν εἴργει σοὶ τελειοῦσθαι τάδε,
ἐπεὶ κελεύεις κἀξαναγκάζεις, πάτερ.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

ἄγε νυν, πρὶν τήνδ' ἀνακινῆσαι
νόσον, ὦ ψυχὴ σκληρά, χάλυβος 1260
λιθοκόλλητον στόμιον παρέχουσ',
ἀνάπαυε βοήν, ὡς ἐπίχαρτον
τελέουσ' ἀεκούσιον ἔργον.

ΥΛΛΟΣ

αἴρετ', ὀπαδοί, μεγάλην μὲν ἐμοὶ
τούτων θέμενοι συγγνωμοσύνην,
μεγάλην δὲ θεῶν ἀγνωμοσύνην
εἰδότες ἔργων τῶν πρασσομένων,
οἳ φύσαντες καὶ κληζόμενοι
πατέρες τοιαῦτ' ἐφορῶσι πάθη.
τὰ μὲν οὖν μέλλοντ' οὐδεὶς ἐφορᾷ, 1270
τὰ δὲ νῦν ἑστῶτ' οἰκτρὰ μὲν ἡμῖν,
αἰσχρὰ δ' ἐκείνοις,
χαλεπώτατα δ' οὖν ἀνδρῶν πάντων
τῷ τήνδ' ἄτην ὑπέχοντι.

λείπου μηδὲ σύ, παρθέν', ἀπ' οἴκων,
μεγάλους μὲν ἰδοῦσα νέους θανάτους,
πολλὰ δὲ πήματα καὶ καινοπαθῆ,
κοὐδὲν τούτων ὅ τι μὴ Ζεύς.

(*To* ATTENDANTS)

Ho, haste and lift me. Thus I find repose
The end and consummation of my woes.

HYLLUS

Since, father, this thou straitly dost command,
Naught hinders the fulfilment of thy will.

HERACLES

Rouse, arm thyself, O stubborn heart,
Before again the plague upstart;
Set on thy lips a curb of steel,
Thy mouth let stony silence seal;
Go meet thy doom without a cry,
A victim, happy thus to die.

HYLLUS

Lift him, men, nor take amiss
That I bear a part in this.
We are blameless, but confess
That the gods are pitiless.
Children they beget, and claim
Worship in a father's name,
Yet with apathetic eye
Look upon such agony.
What is yet to be none knows,
But the present's fraught with woes,
Woes for us, for them deep shame;
And of all beneath the sun
Worse than he hath suffered none.

Come, maidens, come away!
Horrors have ye seen this day,
Dire death and direr fall:
And Zeus hath wrought it all.

[*Exeunt* OMNES.

PHILOCTETES

ARGUMENT

NINE *years before the play begins Philoctetes, afflicted by a noisome wound, had been landed by the Greek chiefs on the desert island of Lemnos. He bore with him the famous bow and arrows of Heracles; and without these, as a seer afterwards declared to them, Troy could not be taken. So Odysseus was commissioned to bring back by force or fraud the hero and his arms, and he took with him, to aid him in his purpose, the son of Achilles, Philoctetes' dearest friend.*

When the play begins Odysseus has landed and is instructing Neoptolemus in his part. He is to find Philoctetes and reveal who he is, but pretend that he has come to take him back, not to Troy, but home to Greece. Neoptolemus at first indignantly declines the task and is hardly persuaded to play the traitor. He meets Philoctetes coming forth from his cave, makes himself known, and, to gain his confidence, relates fictitious wrongs that he, too, has suffered at the hands of the Greeks. He consents to take Philoctetes home, but as they are starting for the ship a merchant-captain appears (a sailor disguised by Odysseus) who tells them that the Greek captains have sent in pursuit of both. They hasten their departure, but first visit the cave that Philoctetes may fetch away the simples he needs to dress his wound.

ARGUMENT

As he is leaving the cave Philoctetes is seized with a paroxysm of pain. Knowing that after such attacks deep slumber is wont to follow, he entrusts his bow and arrows to Neoptolemus who swears to keep them safe and restore them to their owner. On awakening he demands his bow, but Neoptolemus refuses to give it back and confesses the plot that Philoctetes now suspects. Stung by the denouncement of his treachery and the pathetic appeal to his better nature, Neoptolemus repents him and is in the act of restoring the bow, when Odysseus, who has been watching the scene in hiding, appears to prevent him. The bow Odysseus will have; Philoctetes may go or stay as he chooses. The pair depart together for the ships and Philoctetes is left behind with the chorus of sailors who endeavour to persuade him to return with them. But he is obdurate and they are about to leave him when Neoptolemus is seen hurrying back with the bow, closely followed by Odysseus who tries in vain to arrest him and threatens to denounce him as a traitor to the host. Philoctetes regains his bow and would have used it to let fly a mortal shaft at Odysseus, had not Neoptolemus stayed his hand. Again he is urged to go back to Troy and again he refuses. Neoptolemus true to his word, reluctantly agrees to convey him home. At this point an apparition is seen in the air above them, the divine form of Heracles, sent by Zeus from Olympus to bid Philoctetes go back to Troy with Neoptolemus and so fulfil the oracle. At last he bows to the will of Heaven.

ΤΑ ΤΟΥ ΔΡΑΜΑΤΟΣ ΠΡΟΣΩΠΑ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ΧΟΡΟΣ
ΣΚΟΠΟΣ ὡς ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

Odysseus.
Neoptolemus.
Philoctetes.
Sailor (*disguised as Merchant Captain*).
Heracles.
Chorus, *Scyrian sailors of Neoptolemus' Crew.*

Scene: Rocky Coast on the Island of Lemnos.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ἀκτὴ μὲν ἥδε τῆς περιρρύτου χθονὸς
Λήμνου, βροτοῖς ἄστιπτος οὐδ' οἰκουμένη,
ἔνθ', ὦ κρατίστου πατρὸς Ἑλλήνων τραφεὶς
Ἀχιλλέως παῖ Νεοπτόλεμε, τὸν Μηλιᾶ
Ποίαντος υἱὸν ἐξέθηκ' ἐγώ ποτε,
ταχθεὶς τόδ' ἔρδειν τῶν ἀνασσόντων ὕπο,
νόσῳ καταστάζοντα διαβόρῳ πόδα·
ὅτ' οὔτε λοιβῆς ἡμὶν οὔτε θυμάτων
παρῆν ἑκήλοις προσθιγεῖν, ἀλλ' ἀγρίαις
κατεῖχ' ἀεὶ πᾶν στρατόπεδον δυσφημίαις, 10
βοῶν, στενάζων. ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν τί δεῖ
λέγειν; ἀκμὴ γὰρ οὐ μακρῶν ἡμῖν λόγων,
μὴ καὶ μάθῃ μ' ἥκοντα κἀκχέω τὸ πᾶν
σόφισμα, τῷ νιν αὐτίχ' αἱρήσειν δοκῶ.
ἀλλ' ἔργον ἤδη σὸν τὰ λοίφ' ὑπηρετεῖν
σκοπεῖν θ' ὅπου 'στ' ἐνταῦθα δίστομος πέτρα
τοιάδ', ἵν' ἐν ψύχει μὲν ἡλίου διπλῆ
πάρεστιν ἐνθάκησις, ἐν θέρει δ' ὕπνον
δι' ἀμφιτρῆτος αὐλίου πέμπει πνοή·
βαιὸν δ' ἔνερθεν ἐξ ἀριστερᾶς τάχ' ἂν 20
ἴδοις ποτὸν κρηναῖον, εἴπερ ἐστὶ σῶν.
ἅ μοι προσελθὼν σῖγα σήμαιν' εἴτ' ἐκεῖ

PHILOCTETES

Enter ODYSSEUS, NEOPTOLEMUS; *in the background, a* SAILOR.

ODYSSEUS

Son of Achilles, Neoptolemus,
Sprung from the noblest of the Grecian host,
This is the beach of Lemnos, sea-girt isle,
A land untrod, untenanted, where once,
As bidden by the chiefs, I put ashore
The Malian, son of Poeas, grievously
Afflicted by his foot's envenomed wound.
For us there was no peace at sacrifice
Or at libations, but the whole camp rang
With his discordant screams and savage yells,
Moaning and groaning. But what skills it now
To tell this tale? No time for large discourse
That might betray our presence and undo
The plot I've laid to catch him presently.
To work! it rests with thee to play thy part,
And help me to discover hereabouts
A cave with double mouth by nature made
To catch on either side the winter sun,
Or by the breeze that through the archway blows
Invite in summer's heat to gentle sleep;
And lower down, a little to the left,
A spring, if still it flows, thou art like to find.
Go warily to work and bring me word,

χῶρον τὸν αὐτὸν[1] *τόνδ' ἔτ' εἴτ' ἄλλῃ κυρεῖ,*
ὡς τἀπίλοιπα τῶν λόγων σὺ μὲν κλύῃς,
ἐγὼ δὲ φράζω, κοινὰ δ' ἐξ ἀμφοῖν ἴῃ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἄναξ 'Οδυσσεῦ, τοὔργον οὐ μακρὰν λέγεις·
δοκῶ γὰρ οἷον εἶπας ἄντρον εἰσορᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἄνωθεν ἢ κάτωθεν; οὐ γὰρ ἐννοῶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τόδ' ἐξύπερθε· καὶ στίβου γ' οὐδεὶς κτύπος.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὅρα καθ' ὕπνον μὴ καταυλισθεὶς κυρεῖ. 30

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὁρῶ κενὴν οἴκησιν ἀνθρώπων δίχα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐδ' ἔνδον οἰκοποιός ἐστί τις τροφή;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

στιπτή γε φυλλὰς ὡς ἐναυλίζοντί τῳ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τὰ δ' ἄλλ' ἔρημα, κοὐδέν ἐσθ' ὑπόστεγον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αὐτόξυλόν γ' ἔκπωμα, φλαυρουργοῦ τινος
τεχνήματ' ἀνδρός, καὶ πυρεῖ' ὁμοῦ τάδε.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

κείνου τὸ θησαύρισμα σημαίνεις τόδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἰοὺ ἰού· καὶ ταῦτά γ' ἄλλα θάλπεται
ῥάκη, βαρείας του νοσηλείας πλέα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἁνὴρ κατοικεῖ τούσδε τοὺς τόπους σαφῶς, 40
κἄστ' οὐχ ἑκάς που· πῶς γὰρ ἂν νοσῶν ἀνὴρ

[1] πρὸς αὐτὸν MSS., Blaydes corr.

Whether he still is there or further gone.
That done, thy part will be to listen, mine
To instruct, that both may gain our common end.

NEOPTOLEMUS

No distant quest, my lord Odysseus, this;
Here, if I err not, is the cave thou seek'st.

ODYSSEUS

Above me or below? I see it not.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Up there; but not a footfall can I hear.

ODYSSEUS

Look if he be not gone within to rest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The chamber's empty; no man is within.

ODYSSEUS

And no provision for a man's abode?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Litter of trodden leaves as for a couch.

ODYSSEUS

And is that all—no other sign of life?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A cup of uncouth handiwork, rough hewn
From out a log; some tinder, too, I see.

ODYSSEUS

These are his household treasures.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Faugh! and here
Spread in the sun to dry, are filthy rags
Dank with the ooze of some malignant sore.

ODYSSEUS

This clearly is his dwelling-place, and he
Hard by, for how could any travel far

κῶλον παλαιᾷ κηρὶ προσβαίη μακράν;
ἀλλ' ἢ 'πὶ φορβῆς νόστον ἐξελήλυθεν
ἢ φύλλον εἴ τι νώδυνον κάτοιδέ που.
τὸν οὖν παρόντα πέμψον εἰς κατασκοπήν,
μὴ καὶ λάθῃ με προσπεσών· ὡς μᾶλλον ἂν
ἕλοιτό μ' ἢ τοὺς πάντας Ἀργείους λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔρχεταί τε καὶ φυλάξεται στίβος.
σὺ δ', εἴ τι χρῄζεις, φράζε δευτέρῳ λόγῳ.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ἀχιλλέως παῖ, δεῖ σ' ἐφ' οἷς ἐλήλυθας 50
γενναῖον εἶναι, μὴ μόνον τῷ σώματι,
ἀλλ' ἤν τι καινὸν ὧν πρὶν οὐκ ἀκήκοας
κλύῃς, ὑπουργεῖν, ὡς ὑπηρέτης πάρει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἄνωγας;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τὴν Φιλοκτήτου σε δεῖ
ψυχὴν ὅπως δόλοισιν[1] ἐκκλέψεις λέγων.
ὅταν σ' ἐρωτᾷ τίς τε καὶ πόθεν πάρει,
λέγειν, Ἀχιλλέως παῖς· τόδ' οὐχὶ κλεπτέον·
πλεῖς δ' ὡς πρὸς οἶκον, ἐκλιπὼν τὸ ναυτικὸν
στράτευμ' Ἀχαιῶν, ἔχθος ἐχθήρας μέγα,
οἵ σ' ἐν λιταῖς στείλαντες ἐξ οἴκων μολεῖν, 60
μόνην ἔχοντες τήνδ' ἅλωσιν Ἰλίου,
οὐκ ἠξίωσαν τῶν Ἀχιλλείων ὅπλων
ἐλθόντι δοῦναι κυρίως αἰτουμένῳ,
ἀλλ' αὔτ' Ὀδυσσεῖ παρέδοσαν· λέγων ὅσ' ἂν
θέλῃς καθ' ἡμῶν ἔσχατ' ἐσχάτων κακά.

[1] λόγοισιν MSS., Gedike corr.

Thus maimed and hobbled by an ancient wound?
Either in quest of food, or else to find
Some simples known to him as anodynes,
He's gone abroad, and shortly will return;
So post thy henchman there to watch the path,
Lest he surprise me. I of all the Greeks
Am the one foe he liefest here would catch.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Guard shall be kept; my man is on his way;
And now if thou hast more to say, say on.

[*Exit* ATTENDANT

ODYSSEUS

Son of Achilles, not in thews alone
Or prowess must thou prove thy breed to-day.
If tasks be set thee that seem strange, no less
Thou must perform them; therefore wast thou sent.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is thy hest?

ODYSSEUS

Thou must cajole and cheat
The soul of Philoctetes by fair words,
And when he asks thee who and whence thou art,
"Achilles' son," make answer; hide not this.
But add, "I am sailing homewards and have left
The fleet in dudgeon, wroth against the chiefs
Who first prevailed on me to quit my home,
Because without me Troy could ne'er be taken,
And then upon my coming basely spurned
My righteous title to Achilles' arms,
And gave them to Odysseus." At my name
Heap on me every scoff and scorn and taunt;

τούτῳ[1] γὰρ οὐδέν μ' ἀλγυνεῖς· εἰ δ' ἐργάσει
μὴ ταῦτα, λύπην πᾶσιν Ἀργείοις βαλεῖς.
εἰ γὰρ τὰ τοῦδε τόξα μὴ ληφθήσεται,
οὐκ ἔστι πέρσαι σοι τὸ Δαρδάνου πέδον.
ὡς δ' ἔστ' ἐμοὶ μὲν οὐχί, σοὶ δ' ὁμιλία 70
πρὸς τόνδε πιστὴ καὶ βέβαιος, ἔκμαθε.
σὺ μὲν πέπλευκας οὔτ' ἔνορκος οὐδενὶ
οὔτ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης οὔτε τοῦ πρώτου στόλου·
ἐμοὶ δὲ τούτων οὐδέν ἐστ' ἀρνήσιμον.
ὥστ' εἴ με τόξων ἐγκρατὴς αἰσθήσεται,
ὄλωλα καὶ σὲ προσδιαφθερῶ ξυνών.
ἀλλ' αὐτὸ τοῦτο δεῖ σοφισθῆναι, κλοπεὺς
ὅπως γενήσει τῶν ἀνικήτων ὅπλων.
ἔξοιδα, παῖ, φύσει σε μὴ πεφυκότα
τοιαῦτα φωνεῖν μηδὲ τεχνᾶσθαι κακά· 80
ἀλλ' ἡδὺ γάρ τι κτῆμα τῆς νίκης λαβεῖν,
τόλμα· δίκαιοι δ' αὖθις ἐκφανούμεθα.
νῦν δ' εἰς ἀναιδὲς ἡμέρας μέρος βραχὺ
δός μοι σεαυτόν, κᾆτα τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον
κέκλησο πάντων εὐσεβέστατος βροτῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν οὓς ἂν τῶν λόγων ἀλγῶ κλύων,
Λαερτίου παῖ, τούσδε καὶ πράσσειν στυγῶ·
ἔφυν γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐκ τέχνης πράσσειν κακῆς,
οὔτ' αὐτὸς οὔθ', ὥς φασιν, οὑκφύσας ἐμέ.
ἀλλ' εἴμ' ἑτοῖμος πρὸς βίαν τὸν ἄνδρ' ἄγειν 90
καὶ μὴ δόλοισιν· οὐ γὰρ ἐξ ἑνὸς ποδὸς
ἡμᾶς τοσούσδε πρὸς βίαν χειρώσεται.
πεμφθείς γε μέντοι σοὶ ξυνεργάτης ὀκνῶ
προδότης καλεῖσθαι· βούλομαι δ', ἄναξ, καλῶς
δρῶν ἐξαμαρτεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ νικᾶν κακῶς.

[1] τούτων MSS., Buttmann corr.

It will not hurt me, but if thou should'st fail
'Twill sorely vex the Argives one and all.
This man's artillery we needs must have;
No hope to capture Troy-town otherwise.
Why *thou* canst hold free converse with the man
Securely and I cannot, thou shalt learn.
Thou wast not bound by oath or pledge to sail
Nor wast thou with the fleet that first embarked;
But naught of this, if taxed, can I deny.
Therefore, if, bow in hand, he counters me,
I die, and shall involve thee in my death.
How to possess us of those matchless arms—
There is the puzzle; set thy wits to that.
I know, my son, thy honest nature shrinks
From glozing words and practice of deceit;
But (for 'tis sweet to snatch a victory)
Be bold to-day and honest afterwards.
For one brief hour of lying follow me;
All time to come shall prove thy probity.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Son of Laertes, what upon my ear
Grates in the telling, I should hate to do.
Such is my nature; any taint of guile
I loathe, and such, they tell me, was my sire.
But I am ready, not by fraud, but force,
To bring the man; for, crippled in one foot,
Against our numbers he can prove no match.
Nathless, since I was sent to aid thee, prince,
I fear to seem a laggard; yet prefer
To fail with honour than succeed by fraud.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐσθλοῦ πατρὸς παῖ, καὐτὸς ὢν νέος ποτὲ
γλῶσσαν μὲν ἀργόν, χεῖρα δ' εἶχον ἐργάτιν·
νῦν δ' εἰς ἔλεγχον ἐξιὼν ὁρῶ βροτοῖς
τὴν γλῶσσαν, οὐχὶ τἄργα, πάνθ' ἡγουμένην.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί μ' οὖν ἄνωγας ἄλλο πλὴν ψευδῆ λέγειν; 100

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

λέγω σ' ἐγὼ δόλῳ Φιλοκτήτην λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ' ἐν δόλῳ δεῖ μᾶλλον ἢ πείσαντ' ἄγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐ μὴ πίθηται· πρὸς βίαν δ' οὐκ ἂν λάβοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτως ἔχει τι δεινὸν ἰσχύος θράσος;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἰούς γ' ἀφύκτους καὶ προπέμποντας φόνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἆρ' ἐκείνῳ γ' οὐδὲ προσμῖξαι θρασύ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὔ, μὴ δόλῳ λαβόντα γ', ὡς ἐγὼ λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ αἰσχρὸν ἡγεῖ δῆτα τὸ ψευδῆ λέγειν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὔκ, εἰ τὸ σωθῆναί γε τὸ ψεῦδος φέρει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν βλέπων τις ταῦτα τολμήσει λακεῖν; 110

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὅταν τι δρᾷς εἰς κέρδος, οὐκ ὀκνεῖν πρέπει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κέρδος δ' ἐμοὶ τί τοῦτον ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν;

ODYSSEUS

Son of a gallant sire, I too in youth
Was slow of tongue and forward with my hand;
But I have learnt by trial of mankind
Mightier than deeds of puissance is the tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS

It comes to this that thou would'st have me lie.

ODYSSEUS

Entangle Philoctetes by deceit.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Why not persuade him rather than deceive?

ODYSSEUS

Persuasion's vain, and force of no avail.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What arms hath he of such miraculous might?

ODYSSEUS

Unerring arrows, tipp'd with instant death.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Might not a bold man come to grips with him?

ODYSSEUS

No, as I told thee, guile alone avails.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou deem'st it, then, no shame to tell a lie?

ODYSSEUS

Not if success depends upon a lie.

NEOPTOLEMUS

To utter falsehoods I should blush for shame.

ODYSSEUS

If thou wouldst profit thou must have no qualms.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What gain to *me*, should he be brought to Troy?

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

αἱρεῖ τὰ τόξα ταῦτα τὴν Τροίαν μόνα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἆρ' ὁ πέρσων, ὡς ἐφάσκετ', εἴμ' ἐγώ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὔτ' ἂν σὺ κείνων χωρὶς οὔτ' ἐκεῖνα σοῦ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θηρατέ' οὖν γίγνοιτ' ἄν, εἴπερ ὧδ' ἔχει.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὡς τοῦτό γ' ἔρξας δύο φέρει δωρήματα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποίω; μαθὼν γὰρ οὐκ ἂν ἀρνοίμην τὸ δρᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σοφός τ' ἂν αὑτὸς κἀγαθὸς κεκλῇ' ἅμα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἴτω· ποήσω, πᾶσαν αἰσχύνην ἀφείς. 120

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἦ μνημονεύεις οὖν ἅ σοι παρῄνεσα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σάφ' ἴσθ', ἐπείπερ εἰσάπαξ συνῄνεσα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σὺ μὲν μένων νυν κεῖνον ἐνθάδ' ἐκδέχου,
ἐγὼ δ' ἄπειμι, μὴ κατοπτευθῶ παρών,
καὶ τὸν σκοπὸν πρὸς ναῦν ἀποστελῶ πάλιν.
καὶ δεῦρ', ἐάν μοι τοῦ χρόνου δοκῆτέ τι
κατασχολάζειν, αὖθις ἐκπέμψω πάλιν
τοῦτον τὸν αὐτὸν ἄνδρα, ναυκλήρου τρόποις
μορφὴν δολώσας, ὡς ἂν ἀγνοία προσῇ·
οὗ δῆτα, τέκνον, ποικίλως αὐδωμένου 130
δέχου τὰ συμφέροντα τῶν ἀεὶ λόγων.
ἐγὼ δὲ πρὸς ναῦν εἶμι, σοὶ παρεὶς τάδε·

ODYSSEUS
Without these arms Troy-town cannot be sacked.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Ye told me *I* should take it. Was that false?

ODYSSEUS
Not thou apart from these nor these from thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS
The quarry's worth the chase, if this be so.

ODYSSEUS
Know that success a double meed shall win.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Make plain this twofold prize and I'll essay.

ODYSSEUS
Thou wilt be hailed as wise no less than brave.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I'll do it—here's my hand—and risk the shame.

ODYSSEUS
Good. My instructions—thou rememberest them?

NEOPTOLEMUS
I have consented; trust me for the rest.

ODYSSEUS
Stay here then and await his coming, whilst,
Lest I should be espied, I go away
And send back to the ship our sentinel;
But if ye seem to dally overmuch,
He shall return, the same man, but disguised
Past recognition, as a sailor clad.
When he accosts thee, mark each word, my son,
To catch the hid significance, for he
Will speak in riddles. This I leave to thee
And seek the vessel. Hermes aid us both,
Who sent us on our way, the God of cunning,

Ἑρμῆς δ' ὁ πέμπων δόλιος ἡγήσαιτο νῷν
Νίκη τ' Ἀθάνα Πολιάς, ἣ σῴζει μ' ἀεί.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ. α'

τί χρὴ τί χρή με, δέσποτ', ἐν ξένᾳ ξένον
στέγειν ἢ τί λέγειν πρὸς ἄνδρ' ὑπόπταν;
φράζε μοι. τέχνα γὰρ
τέχνας ἑτέρας προύχει
καὶ γνώμα παρ' ὅτῳ τὸ θεῖον
Διὸς σκῆπτρον ἀνάσσεται. 140
σὲ δ', ὦ τέκνον, τόδ' ἐλήλυθεν
πᾶν κράτος ὠγύγιον· τό μοι ἔννεπε
τί σοι χρεὼν ὑπουργεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

νῦν μέν, ἴσως γὰρ τόπον ἐσχατιαῖς
προσιδεῖν ἐθέλεις ὅντινα κεῖται,
δέρκου θαρσῶν· ὁπόταν δὲ μόλῃ
δεινὸς ὁδίτης, τῶνδ' οὐκ[1] μελάθρων
πρὸς ἐμὴν αἰεὶ χεῖρα προχωρῶν
πειρῶ τὸ παρὸν θεραπεύειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μέλον πάλαι μέλημά μοι λέγεις, ἄναξ, ἀντ. α' 150
φρουρεῖν ὄμμ' ἐπὶ σῷ μάλιστα καιρῷ·
νῦν δέ μοι λέγ', αὐλὰς
ποίας ἔνεδρος ναίει
καὶ χῶρον τίν' ἔχει. τὸ γάρ μοι
μαθεῖν οὐκ ἀποκαίριον,
μὴ προσπεσών με λάθῃ ποθέν·
τίς τόπος ἢ τίς ἕδρα; τίν' ἔχει στίβον,
ἔναυλον ἢ θυραῖον;

[1] ἐκ MSS., Jebb corr.

And she who never failed me yet, my queen,
Athenè Polias, queen of victory!

[*Exit* ODYSSEUS.

Enter CHORUS OF SCYRIAN SAILORS.

CHORUS (*Str.* 1)

What, O my master, what must I conceal
And what reveal,
In a strange land a stranger, by what wile
His shrewd suspects beguile?

Instruct me; for his art all art excels
With whom there dwells
The sovereignty of Zeus, the Kingly Crown
That hath to thee come down,

My son, by immemorial right divine;
Such skill is thine;
So teach me, master, how I best may speed
Thy present need.

NEOPTOLEMUS

First to find his lair, no doubt,
Ye are keen; so boldly scout.
When the wild man ye have spied
Who within this cave doth bide,
Watch the motions of my hand,
Prompt to act as I command.

CHORUS (*Ant.* 1)

Now, as at all times, Prince, I gladly heed,
And serve thy need.
But first to learn his common haunts t'were well;
I pray thee tell,
Lest he should light upon me unaware,
His track, his lair.
Say, if within his den he will be found,
Or roaming round.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἶκον μὲν ὁρᾷς τόνδ' ἀμφίθυρον
πετρίνης κοίτης. 160

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῦ γὰρ ὁ τλήμων αὐτὸς ἄπεστιν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

δῆλον ἔμοιγ' ὡς φορβῆς χρείᾳ
στίβον ὀγμεύει τῇδε[1] πέλας που.
ταύτην γὰρ ἔχειν βιοτῆς αὐτὸν
λόγος ἐστὶ φύσιν, θηροβολοῦντα
πτηνοῖς ἰοῖς στυγερὸν στυγερῶς,
οὐδέ τιν' αὐτῷ
παιῶνα κακῶν ἐπινωμᾶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

οἰκτίρω νιν ἔγωγ', ὅπως, στρ. β'
μή του κηδομένου βροτῶν 170
μηδὲ ξύντροφον ὄμμ' ἔχων,
δύστανος, μόνος αἰεί,
νοσεῖ μὲν νόσον ἀγρίαν,
ἀλύει δ' ἐπὶ παντί τῳ
χρείας ἱσταμένῳ. πῶς ποτε πῶς δύσμορος ἀντέχει;
ὦ παλάμαι θεῶν,[2]
ὦ δύστανα γένη βροτῶν,
οἷς μὴ μέτριος αἰών.

οὗτος πρωτογόνων ἴσως ἀντ. β' 180
οἴκων οὐδενὸς ὕστερος,
πάντων ἄμμορος ἐν βίῳ
κεῖται μοῦνος ἀπ' ἄλλων,

[1] τόνδε MSS., Blaydes corr.
[2] θνητῶν MSS., Lachmann corr.

NEOPTOLEMUS

See you that two-mouthed cavern? There
His rocky dwelling-place.

CHORUS

And where
Is the sad inmate of the grot?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I doubt not somewhere near the spot,
Gone forth in search of daily food,
Dragging his steps through wold or wood;
For so, 'tis said, by toilsome pains
A painful sustenance he gains,
Shooting whatever living thing
Comes within reach of his dread bow.
The years go by and never bring
A leach to heal his woe.

CHORUS

O how piteous thy lot, (*Str.* 2)
Luckless man, by man forgot;
None thy solitude to share,
None to tend with loving care;
Plagued and stricken by disease,
Never knowing hour of ease,
Facing death each moment, how
Hast, poor wretch, endured till now?
O the crooked ways of heaven!
Hapless men to whom are given
Lots so changeful, so uneven.

He who with the best might vie, (*Ant.* 2)
Of our Grecian chivalry.
On a desert island left,
Perishes, of all bereft;

στικτῶν ἢ λασίων μετὰ
θηρῶν, ἔν τ' ὀδύναις ὁμοῦ
λιμῷ τ' οἰκτρός, ἀνήκεστα μεριμνήματ' ἔχων· ὀρεί-
α δ'[1] ἀθυρόστομος
'Αχὼ τηλεφανὴς πικραῖς
οἰμωγαῖς ὑπακούει.[2] 190

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐδὲν τούτων θαυμαστὸν ἐμοί·
θεῖα γάρ, εἴπερ κἀγώ τι φρονῶ,
καὶ τὰ παθήματα κεῖνα πρὸς αὐτὸν
τῆς ὠμόφρονος Χρύσης ἐπέβη,
καὶ νῦν ἃ πονεῖ δίχα κηδεμόνων,
οὐκ ἔσθ' ὡς οὐ θεῶν του μελέτῃ
τοῦ μὴ πρότερον τόνδ' ἐπὶ Τροίᾳ
τεῖναι τὰ θεῶν ἀμάχητα βέλη,
πρὶν ὅδ' ἐξήκοι χρόνος, ᾧ λέγεται
χρῆναί σφ' ὑπὸ τῶνδε δαμῆναι. 200

ΧΟΡΟΣ

εὔστομ' ἔχε, παῖ. στρ. γ'

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τόδε;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

προυφάνη κτύπος,
φωτὸς σύντροφος ὡς τειρομένου του,[3]
ἤ που τῇδ' ἢ τῇδε τόπων.
βάλλει βάλλει μ' ἐτύμα
φθογγά του στίβον κατ' ἀνάγκαν
ἕρποντος, οὐδέ με λάθει
βαρεῖα τηλόθεν αὐδὰ τρυσάνωρ· διάσημα γὰρ
θρηνεῖ.

[1] βαραῖα δ' MSS., Mekler corr.
[2] πικρᾶς οἰμωγᾶς ὑπόκειται MSS., Blaydes corr.
[3] του added by Porson.

With the savage beasts doth dwell
Of spotted hide or shaggy fell;
Pangs of hunger doth endure,
Racked with aches that know no cure.
Echo, too, with babbling tongue,
As she sits her hills among,
Iterates in undertones
His interminable groans.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nothing strange I see in this.
By heaven ordained (if not amiss
I augur) comes this punishment,
By the unpitying Chrysè[1] sent;
And what he suffers now must be
Designed by some wise deity,
Lest too soon 'gainst Troy should go
The arrows of his wizard bow,
For when the fated hour has come
By them must Troy-town find its doom.

CHORUS

Hush, my son! (*Str.* 3)

NEOPTOLEMUS

Wherefore?

CHORUS (*back*)

Hist! there comes a sound
As of one sore afflicted. Is it here
Or here? 'Tis nearer now, I look around,
The footfall of a laboured tread grows clear;
And now, though distant still, I catch a cry
Distinct, the voice of human agony.

[1] The nymph by whose guardian serpent Philoctetes was bitten. See l. 1326.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔχε, τέκνον, ἀντ. γ'

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

λέγ' ὅ τι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φροντίδας νέας. 210
ὡς οὐκ ἔξεδρος, ἀλλ' ἔντοπος ἀνήρ,
οὐ μολπὰν σύριγγος ἔχων,
ὡς ποιμὴν ἀγροβότας, ἀλλ' ἤ που πταίων ὑπ'
ἀνάγκας
βοᾷ τηλωπὸν ἰωάν,
ἢ ναὸς ἄξενον αὐγάζων ὅρμον· προβοᾷ τι γὰρ
δεινόν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἰὼ ξένοι,
τίνες ποτ' ἐς γῆν τήνδε κἀκ ποίας πάτρας 220
κατέσχετ' οὔτ' εὔορμον οὔτ' οἰκουμένην;
ποίας ἂν ὑμᾶς πατρίδος[1] ἢ γένους ποτὲ
τύχοιμ' ἂν εἰπών; σχῆμα μὲν γὰρ Ἑλλάδος
στολῆς ὑπάρχει προσφιλεστάτης ἐμοί·
φωνῆς δ' ἀκοῦσαι βούλομαι· καὶ μή μ' ὄκνῳ
δείσαντες ἐκπλαγῆτ' ἀπηγριωμένον,
ἀλλ' οἰκτίσαντες ἄνδρα δύστηνον, μόνον,
ἔρημον ὧδε κἄφιλον κακούμενον,[2]
φωνήσατ', εἴπερ ὡς φίλοι προσήκετε.
ἀλλ' ἀνταμείψασθ'· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὸς οὔτ' ἐμὲ 230
ὑμῶν ἁμαρτεῖν τοῦτό γ' οὔθ' ὑμᾶς ἐμοῦ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ ξέν', ἴσθι τοῦτο πρῶτον, οὕνεκα
Ἕλληνές ἐσμεν· τοῦτο γὰρ βούλει μαθεῖν.

[1] πάτρας ἂν ὑμᾶς MSS., Dindorf corr.
[2] καλούμενον MSS., Brunck corr.

CHORUS

Bethink thee, Prince. (*Ant.* 3)

NEOPTOLEMUS

Of what?

CHORUS

Some fresh device;
For now the man approaches very near.
This is no shepherd-swain who homeward hies,
No melody of pastoral pipe I hear;
But as he stumbles 'mid the jagged stones
He rends the air with far resounding groans,
Or as he eyes the sea without a sail,
He utters (hear his voice!) a hideous wail.

Enter PHILOCTETES.

PHILOCTETES

Sirs, who are ye and whence, who have landed here
Upon this harbourless and desolate shore?
What countrymen and of what race? If I
Might make conjecture by your garb and mien,
Ye are Greeks—a sight most welcome to my eyes;
But I would hear your voices. Shrink not back
In horror at my savage aspect; speak;
Pity a lonely, friendless, stricken man
Thus stranded; if indeed as friends ye come,
Make answer, I entreat ye; fair reply
I may expect from you, as you from me.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I will answer first thy question, Sir;
Thou hast conjectured rightly, we are Greeks.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὦ φίλτατον φώνημα· φεῦ τὸ καὶ λαβεῖν
πρόσφθεγμα τοιοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐν χρόνῳ μακρῷ.
τίς σ', ὦ τέκνον, προσέσχε, τίς προσήγαγεν
χρεία; τίς ὁρμή; τίς ἀνέμων ὁ φίλτατος;
γέγωνέ μοι πᾶν τοῦθ', ὅπως εἰδῶ τίς εἶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐγὼ γένος μέν εἰμι τῆς περιρρύτου
Σκύρου· πλέω δ' ἐς οἶκον· αὐδῶμαι δὲ παῖς 240
'Αχιλλέως, Νεοπτόλεμος. οἶσθα δὴ τὸ πᾶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὦ φιλτάτου παῖ πατρός, ὦ φίλης χθονός,
ὦ τοῦ γέροντος θρέμμα Λυκομήδους, τίνι
στόλῳ προσέσχες τήνδε γῆν πόθεν πλέων;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἐξ Ἰλίου τοι δὴ τανῦν γε ναυστολῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
πῶς εἶπας; οὐ γὰρ δὴ σύ γ' ἦσθα ναυβάτης
ἡμῖν κατ' ἀρχὴν τοῦ πρὸς Ἴλιον στόλου.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἦ γὰρ μετέσχες καὶ σὺ τοῦδε τοῦ πόνου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
ὦ τέκνον, οὐ γὰρ οἶσθά μ' ὅντιν' εἰσορᾷς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
πῶς γὰρ κάτοιδ' ὅν γ' εἶδον οὐδεπώποτε; 250

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ
οὐδ' ὄνομ' ἄρ'[1] οὐδὲ τῶν ἐμῶν κακῶν κλέος
ᾔσθου ποτ' οὐδέν, οἷς ἐγὼ διωλλύμην;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ὡς μηδὲν εἰδότ' ἴσθι μ' ὧν ἀνιστορεῖς.

[1] ἄρ' added by Erfurdt.

PHILOCTETES

O welcome utterance! Ah how good it is
To hear those accents, long unheard, from thee.
What quest, my son, what venture brought thee here,
What breeze compelled thy canvas? Happy breeze!
Speak, tell me all, that I may know my friend.

NEOPTOLEMUS

My home's the wave-lapped Scyros, and I sail
Homewards; my name is Neoptolemus,
My sire Achilles. Now thou knowest all.

PHILOCTETES

Son of a sire most dear, and land most dear,
Old Lycomedes' foster-child, what quest
Has brought thee hither, from what port didst sail?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Hither I sailed direct from Ilium.

PHILOCTETES

From Ilium? Surely thou wast not on board
When first our expedition sailed for Troy.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What, wert thou partner in that enterprise?

PHILOCTETES

Dost thou not know with whom thou speak'st, my son?

NEOPTOLEMUS

How should I know a man ne'er seen before?

PHILOCTETES

Know'st thou not e'en my name? hast never heard
How I was wasting inch by inch away?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Of all thou questionest I nothing know.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ πόλλ' ἐγὼ μοχθηρός, ὦ πικρὸς θεοῖς,
οὗ μηδὲ κληδὼν ὧδ' ἔχοντος οἴκαδε
μηδ' Ἑλλάδος γῆς μηδαμοῦ διῆλθέ που.
ἀλλ' οἱ μὲν ἐκβαλόντες ἀνοσίως ἐμὲ
γελῶσι σῖγ' ἔχοντες, ἡ δ' ἐμὴ νόσος
ἀεὶ τέθηλε κἀπὶ μεῖζον ἔρχεται.
ὦ τέκνον, ὦ παῖ πατρὸς ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως, 260
ὅδ' εἴμ' ἐγώ σοι κεῖνος, ὃν κλύεις ἴσως
τῶν Ἡρακλείων ὄντα δεσπότην ὅπλων,
ὁ τοῦ Ποίαντος παῖς Φιλοκτήτης, ὃν οἱ
δισσοὶ στρατηγοὶ χὠ Κεφαλλήνων ἄναξ
ἔρριψαν αἰσχρῶς ὧδ' ἔρημον, ἀγρίᾳ
νόσῳ καταφθίνοντα, τῆς ἀνδροφθόρου
πληγέντ' ἐχίδνης ἀγρίῳ χαράγματι·
ξὺν ᾗ μ' ἐκεῖνοι, παῖ, προθέντες ἐνθάδε
ᾤχοντ' ἔρημον, ἡνίκ' ἐκ τῆς ποντίας
Χρύσης κατέσχον δεῦρο ναυβάτῃ στόλῳ. 270
τότ' ἄσμενοί μ' ὡς εἶδον ἐκ πολλοῦ σάλου
εὕδοντ' ἐπ' ἀκτῆς ἐν κατηρεφεῖ πέτρᾳ,
λιπόντες ᾤχονθ', οἷα φωτὶ δυσμόρῳ
ῥάκη προθέντες βαιὰ καί τι καὶ βορᾶς
ἐπωφέλημα σμικρόν, οἷ' αὐτοῖς τύχοι.
σὺ δή, τέκνον, ποίαν μ' ἀνάστασιν δοκεῖς
αὐτῶν βεβώτων ἐξ ὕπνου στῆναι τότε;
ποῖ' ἐκδακρῦσαι, ποῖ' ἀποιμῶξαι κακά;
ὁρῶντα μὲν ναῦς, ἃς ἔχων ἐναυστόλουν,
πάσας βεβώσας, ἄνδρα δ' οὐδέν' ἔντοπον, 280
οὐχ ὅστις ἀρκέσειεν οὐδ' ὅστις νόσου
κάμνοντι συλλάβοιτο· πάντα δὲ σκοπῶν
ηὕρισκον οὐδὲν πλὴν ἀνιᾶσθαι παρόν,
τούτου δὲ πολλὴν εὐμάρειαν, ὦ τέκνον.

PHILOCTETES

O what a heaven-forsaken wretch am I,
Of whose disastrous plight no rumour yet
Hath reached my home or any Grecian land!
But they, the godless knaves who cast me forth,
Laugh and are mute. My malady the while
Rankles, and daily grows from bad to worse.
O boy, O son sprung from Achilles' loins,
I am that man, of whom thou mayst have heard,
Heritor of the bow of Heracles,
The son of Poeas, Philoctetes, whom
The Atridae and the Cephallenian prince
Cast forth thus shamelessly, a derelict,
Plague-stricken, wasting slowly, marked for death
By a man-slaying serpent's venomous fangs.
Thus plagued, my son, they left me here, what time
Their fleet from sea-girt Chrysè touched this shore.
Tired with long tossing I had fallen asleep
Beneath a rock upon the beach; they laughed
To see me witless, laughed and sailed away,
Flinging me, as they went, some cast-off rags,
A beggar's alms, and scraps of food. God grant
That they may some day come to fare like me!
Picture, my son, when I awoke and found
All gone, what waking then was mine; what tears,
What lamentations, when I saw the ships
In which I sailed all vanished; not a soul
To share my solitude or tend my wound.
All ways I gazed and nothing found but pain,
Pain, and of pain, God wot, enow, my son.

ὁ μὲν χρόνος δὴ διὰ χρόνου προύβαινέ μοι,
κἄδει τι βαιᾷ τῇδ' ὑπὸ στέγῃ μόνον
διακονεῖσθαι. γαστρὶ μὲν τὰ σύμφορα
τόξον τόδ' ἐξηύρισκε, τὰς ὑποπτέρους
βάλλον πελείας· πρὸς δὲ τοῦθ', ὅ μοι βάλοι
νευροσπαδὴς ἄτρακτος, αὐτὸς ἂν τάλας 290
εἰλυόμην, δύστηνον ἐξέλκων πόδα,
πρὸς τοῦτ' ἄν· εἴ τ' ἔδει τι καὶ ποτὸν λαβεῖν,
καί που πάγου χυθέντος, οἷα χείματι,
ξύλον τι θραῦσαι, ταῦτ' ἂν ἐξέρπων τάλας
ἐμηχανώμην· εἶτα πῦρ ἂν οὐ παρῆν,
ἀλλ' ἐν πέτροισι πέτρον ἐκτρίβων μόλις
ἔφην' ἄφαντον φῶς, ὃ καὶ σῴζει μ' ἀεί.
οἰκουμένη γὰρ οὖν στέγη πυρὸς μέτα
πάντ' ἐκπορίζει πλὴν τὸ μὴ νοσεῖν ἐμέ.
φέρ', ὦ τέκνον, νῦν καὶ τὸ τῆς νήσου μάθῃς. 300
ταύτῃ πελάζει ναυβάτης οὐδεὶς ἑκών·
οὐ γάρ τις ὅρμος ἔστιν οὐδ' ὅποι πλέων
ἐξεμπολήσει κέρδος ἢ ξενώσεται.
οὐκ ἐνθάδ' οἱ πλοῖ τοῖσι σώφροσιν βροτῶν.
τάχ' οὖν τις ἄκων ἔσχε· πολλὰ γὰρ τάδε
ἐν τῷ μακρῷ γένοιτ' ἂν ἀνθρώπων χρόνῳ·
οὗτοί μ', ὅταν μόλωσιν, ὦ τέκνον, λόγοις
ἐλεοῦσι μέν, καί πού τι καὶ βορᾶς μέρος
προσέδοσαν οἰκτίραντες ἤ τινα στολήν·
ἐκεῖνο δ' οὐδείς, ἡνίκ' ἂν μνησθῶ, θέλει, 310
σῶσαί μ' ἐς οἴκους, ἀλλ' ἀπόλλυμαι τάλας
ἔτος τόδ' ἤδη δέκατον ἐν λιμῷ τε καὶ
κακοῖσι βόσκων τὴν ἀδηφάγον νόσον.
τοιαῦτ' Ἀτρεῖδαί μ' ἥ τ' Ὀδυσσέως βία,
ὦ παῖ, δεδράκασ', οἷ' Ὀλύμπιοι θεοὶ
δοῖέν ποτ' αὐτοῖς ἀντίποιν' ἐμοῦ παθεῖν.

So passed the crawling hours, day upon day,
Year after year. I shifted for myself
Beneath this homeless, solitary roof.
To sate my hunger with this bow I shot
The wingèd doves and ever when my bolt
Sped from the taut string to the mark, I crawled
Thither my lamed foot trailing painfully.
And if of water I had need, or when
In winter time the ground was hoar with frost,
And firewood must be fetched, forth would I creep
Somewise to compass this. I had no fire,
But from the hard rock striking flint on flint
Brought forth the hidden spark that keeps me alive.
For, look ye, a bare roof and fire withal
Serve all my needs, save healing of my sore.
  Now let me tell thee of this isle, my son.
No mariner sails hither of his will,
For anchorage is none, nor mart whereat
He may find lodging and exchange his wares
For profit; prudent men sail not this way.
Yet a stray visitor—such accidents
Must happen in long years—puts in perforce.
From such, my son, when they do come, I get
Kind words of pity and perchance an alms
Of food or raiment, but at the first hint
Of passage home, they one and all refuse.
So here for ten long years I linger on,
Consumed with hunger, dying inch by inch;
Only the worm that gnaws me dieth not.
To the Atridae and Odysseus, boy,
I owe this misery. God in heaven requite
In kind the wrongs that they have done to me!

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἔοικα κἀγὼ τοῖς ἀφιγμένοις ἴσα
ξένοις ἐποικτίρειν σε, Ποίαντος τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ δὲ καὐτὸς τοῖσδε μάρτυς ἐν λόγοις,
ὡς εἴσ' ἀληθεῖς οἶδα, συντυχὼν κακῶν 320
ἀνδρῶν Ἀτρειδῶν τῆς τ' Ὀδυσσέως βίας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦ γάρ τι καὶ σὺ τοῖς πανωλέθροις ἔχεις
ἔγκλημ' Ἀτρείδαις, ὥστε θυμοῦσθαι παθών;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θυμὸν γένοιτο χειρὶ πληρῶσαί ποτε,
ἵν' αἱ Μυκῆναι γνοῖεν ἡ Σπάρτη θ' ὅτι
χἠ Σκῦρος ἀνδρῶν ἀλκίμων μήτηρ ἔφυ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εὖ γ', ὦ τέκνον· τίνος γὰρ ὧδε τὸν μέγαν
χόλον κατ' αὐτῶν ἐγκαλῶν ἐλήλυθας;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ παῖ Ποίαντος, ἐξερῶ, μόλις δ' ἐρῶ,
ἅγωγ' ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἐξελωβήθην μολών. 330
ἐπεὶ γὰρ ἔσχε μοῖρ' Ἀχιλλέα θανεῖν,

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι· φράσῃς μοι μὴ πέρα, πρὶν ἂν μάθω
πρῶτον τόδ', ἦ τέθνηχ' ὁ Πηλέως γόνος;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τέθνηκεν, ἀνδρὸς οὐδενός, θεοῦ δ' ὕπο,
τοξευτός, ὡς λέγουσιν, ἐκ Φοίβου δαμείς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' εὐγενὴς μὲν ὁ κτανών τε χὠ θανών·
ἀμηχανῶ δὲ πότερον, ὦ τέκνον, τὸ σὸν
πάθημ' ἐλέγχω πρῶτον ἢ κεῖνον στένω.

CHORUS

O son of Poeas, I too pity thee
No less methinks than did those visitors.

NEOPTOLEMUS

And I myself am witness that thy tale
Is true; for I have proved the villainy
Of the Atridae, and Odysseus too.

PHILOCTETES

What have those cursed Atridae wrongèd *thee*?
Art thou too stirred to anger by some wrong?

NEOPTOLEMUS

O that my wrath might vent itself in deeds!
Mycenae then and Sparta both would learn
That Scyros too is mother of brave sons.

PHILOCTETES

Well said, my son! But I would know the grounds
Of thy resentment, what the charge thou bring'st,
Why thou art here.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I scarce know how, O son
Of Poeas, yet I'll tell the tale of wrongs
I suffered on my coming at their hands.
When by the doom of Fate Achilles died—

PHILOCTETES

Woe's me! No more; first tell me, is he dead,
The son of Peleus?

NEOPTOLEMUS

He is dead indeed,
Slain by no man but by a god; a shaft
Pierced him; by Phoebus sped, so runs the tale.

PHILOCTETES

Noble alike the slayer and the slain!
I know not whether first, my son, to make
Inquiry of thy woes or weep for him.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἶμαι μὲν ἀρκεῖν σοί γε καὶ τὰ σ', ὦ τάλας,
ἀλγήμαθ', ὥστε μὴ τὰ τῶν πέλας στένειν. 340

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὀρθῶς ἔλεξας· τοιγαροῦν τὸ σὸν φράσον
αὖθις πάλιν μοι πρᾶγμ', ὅτῳ σ' ἐνύβρισαν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦλθόν με νηὶ ποικιλοστόλῳ μέτα
δῖός τ' Ὀδυσσεὺς χὠ τροφεὺς τοὐμοῦ πατρός,
λέγοντες, εἴτ' ἀληθὲς εἴτ' ἄρ' οὖν μάτην,
ὡς οὐ θέμις γίγνοιτ', ἐπεὶ κατέφθιτο
πατὴρ ἐμός, τὰ πέργαμ' ἄλλον ἢ μ' ἑλεῖν.
ταῦτ', ὦ ξέν', οὕτως ἐννέποντες οὐ πολὺν
χρόνον μ' ἐπέσχον μή με ναυστολεῖν ταχύ,
μάλιστα μὲν δὴ τοῦ θανόντος ἱμέρῳ, 350
ὅπως ἴδοιμ' ἄθαπτον· οὐ γὰρ εἰδόμην·
ἔπειτα μέντοι χὠ λόγος καλὸς προσῆν,
εἰ τἀπὶ Τροίᾳ πέργαμ' αἱρήσοιμ' ἰών.
ἦν δ' ἦμαρ ἤδη δεύτερον πλέοντί μοι,
κἀγὼ πικρὸν Σίγειον οὐρίῳ πλάτῃ
κατηγόμην· καί μ' εὐθὺς ἐν κύκλῳ στρατὸς
ἐκβάντα πᾶς ἠσπάζετ', ὀμνύντες βλέπειν
τὸν οὐκέτ' ὄντα ζῶντ' Ἀχιλλέα πάλιν.
κεῖνος μὲν οὖν ἔκειτ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὁ δύσμορος
ἐπεὶ 'δάκρυσα κεῖνον, οὐ μακρῷ χρόνῳ 360
ἐλθὼν Ἀτρείδας πρὸς φίλους, ὡς εἰκὸς ἦν,
τά θ' ὅπλ' ἀπῄτουν τοῦ πατρὸς τά τ' ἄλλ' ὅσ' ἦν.
οἱ δ' εἶπον, οἴμοι, τλημονέστατον λόγον·
ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀχιλλέως, τἄλλα μὲν πάρεστί σοι
πατρῷ' ἑλέσθαι, τῶν δ' ὅπλων κείνων ἀνὴρ
ἄλλος κρατύνει νῦν, ὁ Λαέρτου γόνος.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou hast enough of thine own pains, poor soul,
Without lamenting for another's woe.

PHILOCTETES

True, true indeed! So tell me once again
From the beginning how they outraged thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

To fetch me in a gay decked galley came
Odysseus and my father's foster-sire.[1]
They told me (if the tale was true or feigned
I know not) that, my father having fallen,
No hand but mine could take the Citadel.
Thus urged I did not dally or delay.
Forthwith I sailed. Chiefly I longed to see
My father whom in life I had not seen,
Before his burial, and in part, I own,
The promise fair that I should take Troy-town
Flattered my pride. Well, on the second day,
With oars and breeze to speed us, we had reached
Sigeum (hateful name) and when I landed
The whole host pressed to greet me, and they swore
They saw Achilles come to life again.
There lay my sire in death, and I, poor fool,
When I had mourned for him a while, betook me
To the Atridae as my natural friends,
Claiming my sire's arms and what else was his.
O 'twas a sorry answer that they made:
"Child of Achilles, all that was thy sire's
Is thine and welcome—all except his arms;
These to Laertes' son have been assigned."

[1] Phoenix.

κἀγὼ δακρύσας εὐθὺς ἐξανίσταμαι
ὀργῇ βαρείᾳ, καὶ καταλγήσας λέγω·
ὦ σχέτλι', ἦ 'τολμήσατ' ἀντ' ἐμοῦ τινι
δοῦναι τὰ τεύχη τἀμά, πρὶν μαθεῖν ἐμοῦ; 370
ὁ δ' εἶπ' Ὀδυσσεύς, πλησίον γὰρ ὢν κυρεῖ,
ναί, παῖ, δεδώκασ' ἐνδίκως οὗτοι τάδε·
ἐγὼ γὰρ αὔτ' ἔσωσα κἀκεῖνον παρών.
κἀγὼ χολωθεὶς εὐθὺς ἤρασσον κακοῖς
τοῖς πᾶσιν, οὐδὲν ἐνδεὲς ποιούμενος,
εἰ τἀμὰ κεῖνος ὅπλ' ἀφαιρήσοιτό με.
ὁ δ' ἐνθάδ' ἥκων, καίπερ οὐ δύσοργος ὤν,
δηχθεὶς πρὸς ἁξήκουσεν ὧδ' ἠμείψατο·
οὐκ ἦσθ' ἵν' ἡμεῖς, ἀλλ' ἀπῆσθ' ἵν' οὔ σ' ἔδει·
καὶ ταῦτ', ἐπειδὴ καὶ λέγεις θρασυστομῶν, 380
οὐ μήποτ' ἐς τὴν Σκῦρον ἐκπλεύσῃς ἔχων.
τοιαῦτ' ἀκούσας κἀξονειδισθεὶς κακὰ
πλέω πρὸς οἴκους, τῶν ἐμῶν τητώμενος
πρὸς τοῦ κακίστου κἀκ κακῶν Ὀδυσσέως.
κοὐκ αἰτιῶμαι κεῖνον ὡς τοὺς ἐν τέλει·
πόλις γάρ ἐστι πᾶσα τῶν ἡγουμένων
στρατός τε σύμπας· οἱ δ' ἀκοσμοῦντες βροτῶν
διδασκάλων λόγοισι γίγνονται κακοί.
λόγος λέλεκται πᾶς· ὁ δ' Ἀτρείδας στυγῶν
ἐμοί θ' ὁμοίως καὶ θεοῖς εἴη φίλος. 390

ΧΟΡΟΣ

στρ.

ὀρεστέρα παμβῶτι Γᾶ, μᾶτερ αὐτοῦ Διός,
ἃ τὸν μέγαν Πακτωλὸν εὔχρυσον νέμεις,
σὲ κἀκεῖ, μᾶτερ πότνι', ἐπηυδώμαν,

I wept, I started to my feet in wrath,
And bitterly I spake, "O tyrannous men,
How dare ye give these arms, my own by right,
My leave unasked, to any man but me?"
Then said Odysseus who was standing by,
"Yes, boy, and rightly are they given to me,
Who rescued both their master and his arms."[1]
I boiled with rage, I hurled at him abuse
The bitterest tongue could frame, I cursed the man
Who would defraud me of my rightful arms.
He, though not choleric, challenged thus direct,
Stung to the quick by my retort, replied:
"Thou wast not with us, a malingerer thou!
Take this for answer to thy blustering boasts:
To Scyros with these arms thou ne'er shalt sail."
Thus flouted and abused I left the host,
And now am sailing homewards, robbed by him,
Odysseus, the base villain, basely born.
Yet is he less to blame than those who rule;
For like a commonwealth each armèd host
Perforce is subject to authority,
And all the lawless doings in the world
Spring from ill teaching. All my tale is told.
But whoso hates the Atridae, as do I,
May he find Heaven, no less than me, his friend!

CHORUS

O mother Earth, enthronèd on the hills, (*Str.*)
Mother of Zeus himself, who feedest all;
From thee Pactolus draws his brimming rills,
His golden sands; Mother, to thee I call,

[1] According to the tradition that Ovid followed (*Met.* 13. 284) Odysseus rescued the body and arms of Achilles from the fray.

ὅτ᾽ ἐς τόνδ᾽ Ἀτρειδᾶν ὕβρις πᾶσ᾽ ἐχώρει,
ὅτε τὰ πάτρια τεύχεα παρεδίδοσαν,
ἰὼ μάκαιρα ταυροκτόνων 400
λεόντων ἔφεδρε, τῷ Λαρτίου
σέβας ὑπέρτατον.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔχοντες, ὡς ἔοικε, σύμβολον σαφὲς
λύπης πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὦ ξένοι, πεπλεύκατε,
καί μοι προσᾴδεθ᾽ ὥστε γιγνώσκειν ὅτι
ταῦτ᾽ ἐξ Ἀτρειδῶν ἔργα κἀξ Ὀδυσσέως.
ἔξοιδα γάρ νιν παντὸς ἂν λόγου κακοῦ
γλώσσῃ θιγόντα καὶ πανουργίας, ἀφ᾽ ἧς
μηδὲν δίκαιον ἐς τέλος μέλλοι ποεῖν.
ἀλλ᾽ οὔ τι τοῦτο θαῦμ᾽ ἔμοιγ᾽, ἀλλ᾽ εἰ παρὼν 410
Αἴας ὁ μείζων ταῦθ᾽ ὁρῶν ἠνείχετο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἦν ἔτι ζῶν, ὦ ξέν᾽· οὐ γὰρ ἄν ποτε
ζῶντός γ᾽ ἐκείνου ταῦτ᾽ ἐσυλήθην ἐγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; ἀλλ᾽ ἦ χοὖτος οἴχεται θανών;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς μηκέτ᾽ ὄντα κεῖνον ἐν φάει νόει.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας. ἀλλ᾽ οὐχ ὁ Τυδέως γόνος
οὐδ᾽ οὑμπολητὸς Σισύφου Λαερτίῳ,
οὐ μὴ θάνωσι· τούσδε γὰρ μὴ ζῆν ἔδει.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐ δῆτ᾽· ἐπίστω τοῦτό γ᾽· ἀλλὰ καὶ μέγα
θάλλοντές εἰσι νῦν ἐν Ἀργείων στρατῷ. 420

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί δ᾽; οὐ παλαιὸς[1] κἀγαθὸς φίλος τ᾽ ἐμός,

[1] τί δ᾽ ὠ παλαιός (or ὃς π.) MSS., Meineke corr.

As once I called when, flushed with upstart pride,
The fierce Atridae 'gainst my master raged,
(O lady who on yokèd lions doth ride,
Their bloody ravening by thee assuaged,)
What time the tyrants to Laertes' son
The guerdon gave, those arms his sire had won.

PHILOCTETES

Good sirs, ye bring me as a talisman,
A common grief; a plaint attuned to mine.
Full well I recognise in this your tale
The Atridae and Odysseus. He, I warrant,
Would have a hand and lend his tongue to abet
Any conspiracy, any deep-laid plot,
If he could compass some dishonest end.
This is not wonderful; but was indeed
The greater Ajax by, to see and brook it?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ajax, my friend, was dead; had he been living
They would not thus have robbed me and despoiled.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? is he too dead and gone?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Yea he hath left the light.

PHILOCTETES

Alas, alas!
But not the son of Tydeus, nor the son
Named of Laertes, bred of Sisyphus;
They die not who should never have been born.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not they indeed, I warrant; they live on,
And in the Argive host are mighty men.

PHILOCTETES

And what of him, my good old friend and true,

Νέστωρ ὁ Πύλιος, ἔστιν; οὗτος γὰρ τά γε
κείνων κάκ' ἐξήρυκε, βουλεύων σοφά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κεῖνός γε πράσσει νῦν κακῶς, ἐπεὶ θανὼν
'Αντίλοχος αὐτῷ φροῦδος, ὃς παρῆν, γόνος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι, δύ' αὖ τώδ' ἄνδρ' ἔλεξας,[1] οἷν ἐγὼ
ἥκιστ' ἂν ἠθέλησ' ὀλωλότοιν κλύειν.
φεῦ φεῦ· τί δῆτα δεῖ σκοπεῖν, ὅθ' οἵδε μὲν
τεθνᾶσ', 'Οδυσσεὺς δ' ἔστιν αὖ κἀνταῦθ' ἵνα
χρῆν ἀντὶ τούτων αὐτὸν αὐδᾶσθαι νεκρόν; 430

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοφὸς παλαιστὴς κεῖνος· ἀλλὰ χαἰ σοφαὶ
γνῶμαι, Φιλοκτῆτ', ἐμποδίζονται θαμά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φέρ' εἰπὲ πρὸς θεῶν, ποῦ γὰρ ἦν ἐνταῦθά σοι
Πάτροκλος, ὃς σοῦ πατρὸς ἦν τὰ φίλτατα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

χοὖτος τεθνηκὼς ἦν· λόγῳ δέ σ' ἐν βραχεῖ
τοῦτ' ἐκδιδάξω· πόλεμος οὐδέν' ἄνδρ' ἑκὼν
αἱρεῖ πονηρόν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς χρηστοὺς ἀεί.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ξυμμαρτυρῶ σοι· καὶ κατ' αὐτὸ τοῦτό γε
ἀναξίου μὲν φωτὸς ἐξερήσομαι,
γλώσσῃ δὲ δεινοῦ καὶ σοφοῦ, τί νῦν κυρεῖ. 440

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποίου δὲ τούτου πλήν γ' 'Οδυσσέως ἐρεῖς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ τοῦτον εἶπον, ἀλλὰ Θερσίτης τις ἦν,
ὃς οὐκ ἂν εἵλετ' εἰσάπαξ εἰπεῖν, ὅπου
μηδεὶς ἐῴη· τοῦτον οἶσθ' εἰ ζῶν κυρεῖ;

[1] αὔτως δείν' ἔλεξας MSS., Jebb corr.

The Pylian Nestor, lives he not? for he
Oft by his wisdom checked their ill designs.

NEOPTOLEMUS

He is not what he once was, since he lost
His best belovèd son, Antilochus.

PHILOCTETES

Alas! thou tell'st me of a double loss,
The two men whom of all I least could spare.
Ah me! What hope is there when two such men
Are taken and Odysseus lives, whose death
Instead of theirs thou hadst by rights announced?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A cunning gamester, but the cunningest,
O Philoctetes, are full often thrown.

PHILOCTETES

But tell me, prithee, where was he the while,
Patroclus, once thy father's bosom friend?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Dead like the rest, for this in sooth is true:
War never slays an evil man by choice,
But still the good.

PHILOCTETES

In that I'll bear thee out.
By the same token, I would ask of one,
A worthless wight, but shrewd and glib of tongue.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou mean'st Odysseus, surely?

PHILOCTETES

Not of him
I asked, but of Thersites, one whose tongue
Was ever wagging most when wanted least,
An empty babbler. Know'st thou if he lives?

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ εἶδον αὐτόν, ᾐσθόμην δ' ἔτ' ὄντα νιν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔμελλ'· ἐπεὶ οὐδέν πω κακόν γ' ἀπώλετο,
ἀλλ' εὖ περιστέλλουσιν αὐτὰ δαίμονες,
καί πως τὰ μὲν πανοῦργα καὶ παλιντριβῆ
χαίρουσ' ἀναστρέφοντες ἐξ Ἅιδου, τὰ δὲ
δίκαια καὶ τὰ χρήστ' ἀποστέλλουσ' ἀεί. 450
ποῦ χρὴ τίθεσθαι ταῦτα, ποῦ δ' αἰνεῖν, ὅταν
τὰ θεῖ' ἐπαινῶν τοὺς θεοὺς εὕρω κακούς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγὼ μέν, ὦ γένεθλον Οἰταίου πατρός,
τὸ λοιπὸν ἤδη τηλόθεν τό τ' Ἴλιον
καὶ τοὺς Ἀτρείδας εἰσορῶν φυλάξομαι·
ὅπου δ' ὁ χείρων τἀγαθοῦ μεῖζον σθένει
κἀποφθίνει τὰ χρηστὰ χὠ δειλὸς κρατεῖ,
τούτους ἐγὼ τοὺς ἄνδρας οὐ στέρξω ποτέ·
ἀλλ' ἡ πετραία Σκῦρος ἐξαρκοῦσά μοι
ἔσται τὸ λοιπόν, ὥστε τέρπεσθαι δόμῳ. 460
νῦν δ' εἶμι πρὸς ναῦν· καὶ σύ, Ποίαντος τέκνον,
χαῖρ' ὡς μέγιστα, χαῖρε· καί σε δαίμονες
νόσου μεταστήσειαν, ὡς αὐτὸς θέλεις.
ἡμεῖς δ' ἴωμεν, ὡς ὁπηνίκ' ἂν θεὸς
πλοῦν ἡμὶν εἴκῃ, τηνικαῦθ' ὁρμώμεθα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἤδη, τέκνον, στέλλεσθε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καιρὸς γὰρ καλεῖ
πλοῦν μὴ 'ξ ἀπόπτου μᾶλλον ἢ 'γγύθεν σκοπεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πρός νύν σε πατρὸς πρός τε μητρός, ὦ τέκνον,
πρός τ' εἴ τί σοι κατ' οἶκόν ἐστι προσφιλές,

NEOPTOLEMUS

I saw him not, but heard he was alive.

PHILOCTETES

I thought as much; for evil never dies,
Fostered too well by gods who take delight,
Methinks, to turn back from the gates of hell
All irredeemable rascality,
But speed the righteous on their downward way.
What should I deem of this, how justify
The ways of Heaven, finding Heaven unjust?

NEOPTOLEMUS

For my part, son of an Oetean sire,
I shall take heed henceforward to behold
Troy and the two Atridae from afar.
Where villainy to goodness is preferred,
And virtue withers, and the base hold sway,
Such company I never will frequent.
Enough for me henceforth my native rocks,
My island home in Scyros; there I'll bide.
Now to the ships. Farewell, a fond farewell,
O son of Poeas; may the gods fulfil
Thy heart's desire and heal thee of thy wound!
Now we must leave thee and prepare to sail
Whene'er the gods shall send a favouring breeze.

PHILOCTETES

So soon, my son, departing?

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Tis high time,
Not here, but from the strand to watch the tide.

PHILOCTETES

Oh! in thy father's, in thy mother's name,
Bv all the sanctities of home, my son,

ἱκέτης ἱκνοῦμαι, μὴ λίπῃς μ' οὕτω μόνον, 470
ἔρημον ἐν κακοῖσι τοῖσδ' οἵοις ὁρᾷς
ὅσοισί τ' ἐξήκουσας ἐνναίοντά με·
ἀλλ' ἐν παρέργῳ θοῦ με. δυσχέρεια μέν,
ἔξοιδα, πολλὴ τοῦδε τοῦ φορήματος·
ὅμως δὲ τλῆθι· τοῖσι γενναίοισί τοι
τό τ' αἰσχρὸν ἐχθρὸν καὶ τὸ χρηστὸν εὐκλεές.
σοὶ δ' ἐκλιπόντι τοῦτ' ὄνειδος οὐ καλόν,
δράσαντι δ', ὦ παῖ, πλεῖστον εὐκλείας γέρας,
ἐὰν μόλω 'γὼ ζῶν πρὸς Οὐταίαν χθόνα.
ἴθ'· ἡμέρας τοι μόχθος οὐχ ὅλης μιᾶς. 480
τόλμησον. ἐμβαλοῦ μ' ὅπῃ θέλεις ἄγων,
εἰς ἀντλίαν, εἰς πρῷραν, εἰς πρύμνην, ὅποι
ἥκιστα μέλλω τοὺς ξυνόντας ἀλγυνεῖν.
νεῦσον, πρὸς αὐτοῦ Ζηνὸς ἱκεσίου, τέκνον,
πείσθητι· προσπίτνω σε γόνασι, καίπερ ὢν
ἀκράτωρ ὁ τλήμων, χωλός. ἀλλὰ μή μ' ἀφῇς
ἔρημον οὕτω χωρὶς ἀνθρώπων στίβου,
ἀλλ' ἢ πρὸς οἶκον τὸν σὸν ἔκσωσόν μ' ἄγων
ἢ πρὸς τὰ Χαλκώδοντος Εὐβοίας σταθμά·
κἀκεῖθεν οὔ μοι μακρὸς εἰς Οἴτην στόλος 490
Τραχινίαν τε δεράδα[1] καὶ τὸν εὔροον
Σπερχειὸν ἔσται· πατρί μ' ὡς δείξῃς φίλῳ,
ὃν δὴ παλαιὸν ἐξ ὅτου δέδοικ' ἐγὼ
μή μοι βεβήκῃ. πολλὰ γὰρ τοῖς ἱγμένοις
ἔστελλον αὐτὸν ἱκεσίους πέμπων λιτάς,
αὐτόστολον πέμψαντά μ' ἐκσῶσαι δόμους.
ἀλλ' ἢ τέθνηκεν ἢ τὰ τῶν διακόνων,
ὡς εἰκός, οἶμαι, τοὐμὸν ἐν σμικρῷ μέρος
ποιούμενοι τὸν οἴκαδ' ἤπειγον στόλον.
νῦν δ', εἰς σὲ γὰρ πομπόν τε καὐτὸν ἄγγελον 500

[1] δειράδα MSS., Toup corr. Jebb reads δειράδ' ἠδ' ἐς εὔροον.

Leave me not, I adjure thee, here alone,
Abandoned to such ills as thou hast seen
And others worse whereof thou hast been told.
Think of me as a stowaway! well I know
The irksomeness of such a passenger.
Bear it! to true nobility of soul
All shame is shameful, honour honourable.
And it would smirch thine honour to decline
This task, my son; to do it, bring thee fame
And glory, if ye carry me alive
To Oeta. Come, 'tis but a day's annoy.
Take heart of courage; stow me where thou wilt—
The hold, the bows, the stern, no matter where—
Wherever I shall least offend my mates.
By Zeus, the god of suppliants, O consent,
O hearken! at thy knees I fall, albeit
A cripple maimed and helpless. Leave me not
An outcast in a land where no man dwells;
But either take me safe to thine own home,
Or to Euboea and Chalcodon's realm,
Whence I may cross to Oeta ('tis not far)
And the Trachinean passes and the stream
Of broad Spercheius, and behold once more
My father. Ah! these weary years I've feared
He must be dead, for messages full oft
I sent by those who passed my way, entreating
That he would fetch me in his own ship home
But either he is dead, or, like enough,
My envoys ('tis the way of envoys) recked
Little of my concerns and hastened home.
But now to thee, my messenger at once

ἥκω, σὺ σῶσον, σύ μ' ἐλέησον, εἰσορῶν
ὡς πάντα δεινὰ κἀπικινδύνως βροτοῖς
κεῖται παθεῖν μὲν εὖ, παθεῖν δὲ θάτερα.
χρὴ δ' ἐκτὸς ὄντα πημάτων τὰ δείν' ὁρᾶν,
χὤταν τις εὖ ζῇ, τηνικαῦτα τὸν βίον
σκοπεῖν μάλιστα, μὴ διαφθαρεὶς λάθῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀντ.

οἴκτιρ', ἄναξ· πολλῶν ἔλεξεν δυσοίστων πόνων
ἆθλ', οἷα μηδεὶς τῶν ἐμῶν τύχοι φίλων.
εἰ δὲ πικρούς, ἄναξ, ἔχθεις Ἀτρείδας, 510
ἐγὼ μέν, τὸ κείνων κακὸν τῷδε κέρδος
μετατιθέμενος, ἔνθαπερ ἐπιμέμονεν,
ἐπ' εὐστόλου ταχείας νεὼς
πορεύσαιμ' ἂν ἐς δόμους, τὰν θεῶν
νέμεσιν ἐκφυγών.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὅρα σὺ μὴ νῦν μέν τις εὐχερὴς παρῇς,
ὅταν δὲ πλησθῇς τῆς νόσου ξυνουσίᾳ, 520
τότ' οὐκέθ' αὑτὸς τοῖς λόγοις τούτοις φανῇς.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἥκιστα· τοῦτ' οὐκ ἔσθ' ὅπως ποτ' εἰς ἐμὲ
τοὔνειδος ἕξεις ἐνδίκως ὀνειδίσαι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' αἰσχρὰ μέντοι σοῦ γέ μ' ἐνδεέστερον
ξένῳ φανῆναι πρὸς τὸ καίριον πονεῖν.
ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, πλέωμεν, ὁρμάσθω ταχύς·
χἡ ναῦς γὰρ ἄξει κοὐκ ἀπαρνηθήσεται.
μόνον θεοὶ σῴζοιεν ἔκ τε τῆσδε γῆς
ἡμᾶς ὅποι τ' ἐνθένδε βουλοίμεσθα πλεῖν.

And saviour, I appeal; save, pity me,
Seeing upon how slippery a place
Fortune for mortals and misfortune stand.
Therefore the man that lives at ease should look
For rocks ahead, and when he prospers most
Watch lest he suffer shipwreck unawares.

CHORUS

Pity, my chief! (*Ant.*)
Pity a tale of agonizing grief!
Pray God no friend
Of mine may ever come to such an end!
O pity him!
I know thou hatest, prince, the Atridae grim;
Turn to his gain
The villainy they plotted for his bane.
O take him home!
With him let our brave vessel cleave the foam;
There would he be;
Thus from the dread Avengers shall we flee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

See that your present kindliness be not
A passing mood, lest after, when ye come
In closer contact with his malady,
Ye falter and belie these promises.

CHORUS

No, I shall ne'er be open to such charge.

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Twere shame indeed should I less zealous prove
Than thou to help a stranger in his need.
So, if you please, we'll sail; let him aboard;
Our ship methinks will not refuse her aid.
Only may heaven convey us from this shore
Safe to the haven whither we would sail!

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατον μὲν ἦμαρ, ἥδιστος δ' ἀνήρ, 530
φίλοι δὲ ναῦται, πῶς ἂν ὑμὶν ἐμφανὴς
ἔργῳ γενοίμην, ὥς μ' ἔθεσθε προσφιλῆ;
ἴωμεν, ὦ παῖ, προσκύσαντε τὴν ἔσω
ἄοικον εἰσοίκησιν, ὥς με καὶ μάθῃς
ἀφ' ὧν διέζων ὥς τ' ἔφυν εὐκάρδιος.
οἶμαι γὰρ οὐδ' ἂν ὄμμασιν μόνην θέαν
ἄλλον λαβόντα πλὴν ἐμοῦ τλῆναι τάδε·
ἐγὼ δ' ἀνάγκῃ προὔμαθον στέργειν κακά.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐπίσχετον, μάθωμεν· ἄνδρε γὰρ δύο,
ὁ μὲν νεὼς σῆς ναυβάτης, ὁ δ' ἀλλόθρους, 540
χωρεῖτον, ὧν μαθόντες αὖθις εἴσιτον.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

Ἀχιλλέως παῖ, τόνδε τὸν ξυνέμπορον,
ὃς ἦν νεὼς σῆς σὺν δυοῖν ἄλλοιν φύλαξ,
ἐκέλευσ' ἐμοί σε ποῦ κυρῶν εἴης φράσαι,
ἐπείπερ ἀντέκυρσα, δοξάζων μὲν οὔ,
τύχῃ δέ πως πρὸς ταὐτὸν ὁρμισθεὶς πέδον.
πλέων γὰρ ὡς ναύκληρος οὐ πολλῷ στόλῳ
ἀπ' Ἰλίου πρὸς οἶκον ἐς τὴν εὔβοτρυν
Πεπάρηθον, ὡς ἤκουσα τοὺς ναύτας ὅτι
σοὶ πάντες εἶεν συννεναυστοληκότες, 550
ἔδοξέ μοι μὴ σῖγα, πρὶν φράσαιμί σοι,
τὸν πλοῦν ποεῖσθαι, προστυχόντι τῶν ἴσων.
οὐδὲν σύ που κάτοισθα τῶν σαυτοῦ πέρι,
ἃ τοῖσιν Ἀργείοισιν ἀμφὶ σοῦ νέα
βουλεύματ' ἐστί, κοὐ μόνον βουλεύματα,
ἀλλ' ἔργα δρώμεν', οὐκέτ' ἐξαργούμενα.

PHILOCTETES

O gladdest day, O dearest, dearest friend,
And ye, kind sailors, would that I could prove
By acts my heartfelt gratitude! My son,
Let us be going, but before I go
Salute this homeless home, that thou mayst learn
How hard my life, how great my hardihood.
I think scarce any other man than I,
Had he but seen it once, could have endured;
But I was schooled by hard necessity.

[NEOPTOLEMUS *is about to enter the cave with him.*

CHORUS

Stay, for I see two men approach, the one
A sailor from thy ship, and one a stranger.
First let us learn their errand, then go in.

Enter TWO SAILORS, *one disguised as a Merchant Captain*

SAILOR

Son of Achilles, finding I was moored
In the same roadstead as thyself (by chance
Not of intent), I asked thy shipmate here,
Who with two other hands was left aboard
On guard, to tell me where thou might'st be found.
For I, the captain of a single craft,
Was on my way from Ilium, homeward bound,
To Peparethus, for its vintage famed;
And learning that the crew I met ashore
Were all thy fellow-voyagers, I thought
It would be well, before I sailed away,
To have a word with thee and earn my dues.
I doubt thou knowest naught of thy concerns—
What new designs the Argives have upon thee:
Designs, say I? Nay rather, plots full hatched.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἡ χάρις μὲν τῆς προμηθίας, ξένε,
εἰ μὴ κακὸς πέφυκα, προσφιλὴς μενεῖ·
φράσον δ' ἅπερ, γ' ἔλεξας, ὡς μάθω τί μοι
νεώτερον βούλευμ' ἀπ' Ἀργείων ἔχεις. 560

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

φροῦδοι διώκοντές σε ναυτικῷ στόλῳ
Φοῖνιξ ὁ πρέσβυς οἵ τε Θησέως κόροι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς ἐκ βίας μ' ἄξοντες ἢ λόγοις πάλιν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ'· ἀκούσας δ' ἄγγελος πάρειμί σοι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦ ταῦτα δὴ Φοῖνίξ τε χοἰ ξυνναυβάται
οὕτω καθ' ὁρμὴν δρῶσιν Ἀτρειδῶν χάριν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὡς ταῦτ' ἐπίστω δρώμεν', οὐ μέλλοντ' ἔτι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς οὖν Ὀδυσσεὺς πρὸς τάδ' οὐκ αὐτάγγελος
πλεῖν ἦν ἕτοιμος; ἢ φόβος τις εἶργέ νιν;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

κεῖνός γ' ἐπ' ἄλλον ἄνδρ' ὁ Τυδέως τε παῖς 570
ἔστελλον, ἡνίκ' ἐξανηγόμην ἐγώ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πρὸς ποῖον αὖ τόνδ' αὐτὸς οὑδυσσεὺς ἔπλει;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἦν δή τις—ἀλλὰ τόνδε μοι πρῶτον φράσον
τίς ἐστίν· ἃν λέγῃς δὲ μὴ φώνει μέγα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὅδ' ἔσθ' ὁ κλεινός σοι Φιλοκτήτης, ξένε.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I shall remember, sir, thy zealous care
On my behalf; I am no graceless churl.
But tell me more precisely: let me learn
These strange designs against me of the Greeks.

SAILOR

Old Phoenix has embarked with Theseus' sons
On a war galley in pursuit of thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

To bring me back by force or of my will?

SAILOR

I know not; I report but what I heard.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Are Phoenix and his co-mates fired with zeal
To pleasure the Atridae? can this be?

SAILOR

'Tis no surmise of mine; they are on the way.

NEOPTOLEMUS

How came it that Odysseus had no mind
To sail on his own business? Was he afraid?

SAILOR

He and the son of Tydeus were engaged
In quest of yet another, when I sailed.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Another? Who this second man for whom
Odysseus sailed himself?

SAILOR

A certain one . . .
Stay, who is this beside thee? tell me first
His name, and breathe it softly in my ear.

NEOPTOLEMUS

This, sir, is Philoctetes of world fame.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

μή νύν μ' ἔρῃ τὰ πλεῖον', ἀλλ' ὅσον τάχος
ἔκπλει σεαυτὸν ξυλλαβὼν ἐκ τῆσδε γῆς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί φησιν, ὦ παῖ; τί με κατὰ σκότον ποτὲ
διεμπολᾷ λόγοισι πρός σ' ὁ ναυβάτης;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδά πω τί φησι· δεῖ δ' αὐτὸν λέγειν 580
εἰς φῶς ὃ λέξει, πρὸς σὲ κἀμὲ τούσδε τε.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὦ σπέρμ' Ἀχιλλέως, μή με διαβάλῃς στρατῷ
λέγονθ' ἃ μὴ δεῖ· πόλλ' ἐγὼ κείνων ὕπο
δρῶν ἀντιπάσχω χρηστά θ', οἷ' ἀνὴρ πένης.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐγώ εἰμ' Ἀτρείδαις δυσμενής· οὗτος δέ μοι
φίλος μέγιστος, οὕνεκ' Ἀτρείδας στυγεῖ.
δεῖ δή σ' ἔμοιγ' ἐλθόντα προσφιλῆ, λόγων
κρύψαι πρὸς ἡμᾶς μηδέν' ὧν ἀκήκοας.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ὅρα τί ποιεῖς, παῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σκοπῶ κἀγὼ πάλαι.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

σὲ θήσομαι τῶνδ' αἴτιον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποιοῦ λέγων. 590

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

λέγω. 'πὶ τοῦτον ἄνδρε τώδ' ὥπερ κλύεις,
ὁ Τυδέως παῖς ἥ τ' Ὀδυσσέως βία,
διώμοτοι πλέουσιν ἦ μὴν ἢ λόγῳ
πείσαντες ἄξειν ἢ πρὸς ἰσχύος κράτος.

SAILOR

Stop not for further questioning! Remove!
Fly with all speed thou mayest from this land.

PHILOCTETES

What says he, boy? What does he whisper thee,
As though I were a piece of merchandise.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I know not yet, but he shall tell his tale
Aloud, for thee and me and these to hear.

SAILOR

Child of Achilles, charge me not to the host
For blabbing secrets. I'm a poor man and
Greatly beholden to the generals,
Who've paid me for my service handsomely.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The Atridae are my enemies, and this man
Because he hates them is my dearest friend.
And, if indeed thou comest as a friend,
Thou art bound to tell me all that thou hast learnt.

SAILOR

Take heed, boy, what thou'rt asking.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I have heeded.

SAILOR

Then thou must bear the consequence.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Say on.

SAILOR

Hear then: the two I named, Odysseus and
The son of Tydeus now are hither bound
To fetch this man, and they have sworn an oath
To bring him by persuasion or by force.

καὶ ταῦτ' Ἀχαιοὶ πάντες ἤκουον σαφῶς
Ὀδυσσέως λέγοντος· οὗτος γὰρ πλέον
τὸ θάρσος εἶχε θατέρου δράσειν τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τίνος δ' Ἀτρεῖδαι τοῦδ' ἄγαν οὕτω χρόνῳ
τοσῷδ' ἐπεστρέφοντο πράγματος χάριν,
ὅν γ' εἶχον ἤδη χρόνιον ἐκβεβληκότες; 600
τίς ὁ πόθος αὐτοὺς ἵκετ'; ἢ θεῶν βία
καὶ νέμεσις, οἵπερ ἔργ' ἀμύνουσιν κακά;

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

ἐγώ σε τοῦτ', ἴσως γὰρ οὐκ ἀκήκοας,
πᾶν ἐκδιδάξω. μάντις ἦν τις εὐγενής,
Πριάμου μὲν υἱός, ὄνομα δ' ὠνομάζετο
Ἕλενος, ὃν οὗτος νυκτὸς ἐξελθὼν μόνος,
ὁ πάντ' ἀκούων αἰσχρὰ καὶ λωβήτ' ἔπη
δόλιος Ὀδυσσεὺς εἷλε· δέσμιόν τ' ἄγων
ἔδειξ' Ἀχαιοῖς ἐς μέσον, θήραν καλήν·
ὃς δὴ τά τ' ἄλλ' αὐτοῖσι πάντ' ἐθέσπισεν 610
καὶ τἀπὶ Τροίᾳ πέργαμ' ὡς οὐ μή ποτε
πέρσοιεν, εἰ μὴ τόνδε πείσαντες λόγῳ
ἄγοιντο νήσου τῆσδ' ἐφ' ἧς ναίει τανῦν.
καὶ ταῦθ' ὅπως ἤκουσ' ὁ Λαέρτου τόκος
τὸν μάντιν εἰπόντ', εὐθέως ὑπέσχετο
τὸν ἄνδρ' Ἀχαιοῖς τόνδε δηλώσειν ἄγων·
οἴοιτο μὲν μάλισθ' ἑκούσιον λαβών,
εἰ μὴ θέλοι δ', ἄκοντα· καὶ τούτων κάρα
τέμνειν ἐφεῖτο τῷ θέλοντι μὴ τυχών.
ἤκουσας, ὦ παῖ, πάντα· τὸ σπεύδειν δέ σοι 620
καὐτῷ παραινῶ κεἴ τινος κήδει πέρι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας· ἦ κεῖνος, ἡ πᾶσα βλάβη,
ἔμ' εἰς Ἀχαιοὺς ὤμοσεν πείσας στελεῖν;

This by Odysseus plainly was professed
In presence of the host; for he, more bold
Than his co-partner, staked his credit on it.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But wherefore now, after the lapse of years
Should the Atridae be concerned about
A man they had abandoned and forgot?
Was it compassion touched them, or the dread
Of retribution and the avenging gods?

SAILOR

A matter that perchance to thee is strange
I will unfold. There was a high born seer,
A son of Priam, Helenus was his name.
Him that vile wretch—what epithet can match
His utter villainy?—that sly old fox,
Odysseus, on a nightly prowl waylaid,
Bound, and displayed him to the Argive host,
A goodly prize. Much else of grave import
The prophet uttered, and he spake this word:
"Ne'er can ye take the citadel of Troy
Till by persuasion ye have won him over
And brought him from the island where he bides."
Hearing the prophet's word, Odysseus straight
Engaged himself to bring the man away
And show him to the host. "Willing" (he said),
"I hope, but at the worst, against his will."
He staked his head on the venture; any one
Who chose might be his headsman if he failed.
Thou hast heard all, my son; be warned in time;
Take heed for thine own safety and thy friend's.

PHILOCTETES

Ah me! did that arch-felon swear indeed
To bring me by persuasion to the Greeks?

πεισθήσομαι γὰρ ὧδε κἀξ Ἅιδου θανὼν
πρὸς φῶς ἀνελθεῖν, ὥσπερ οὑκείνου πατήρ.

ΕΜΠΟΡΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ' ἐγὼ ταῦτ'· ἀλλ' ἐγὼ μὲν εἶμ' ἐπὶ
ναῦν, σφῷν δ' ὅπως ἄριστα συμφέροι θεός.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὔκουν τάδ', ὦ παῖ, δεινά, τὸν Λαερτίου
ἔμ' ἐλπίσαι ποτ' ἂν λόγοισι μαλθακοῖς
δεῖξαι νεὼς ἄγοντ' ἐν Ἀργείοις μέσοις; 630
οὔ· θᾶσσον ἂν τῆς πλεῖστον ἐχθίστης ἐμοὶ
κλύοιμ' ἐχίδνης, ἥ μ' ἔθηκεν ὧδ' ἄπουν.
ἀλλ' ἔστ' ἐκείνῳ πάντα λεκτά, πάντα δὲ
τολμητά· καὶ νῦν οἶδ' ὁθούνεχ' ἵξεται.
ἀλλ', ὦ τέκνον, χωρῶμεν, ὡς ἡμᾶς πολὺ
πέλαγος ὁρίζῃ τῆς Ὀδυσσέως νεώς.
ἴωμεν· ἤ τοι καίριος σπουδὴ πόνου
λήξαντος ὕπνον κἀνάπαυλαν ἤγαγεν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκοῦν ἐπειδὰν πνεῦμα τοὐκ πρῴρας ἀνῇ,
τότε στελοῦμεν· νῦν γὰρ ἀντιοστατεῖ. 640

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀεὶ καλὸς πλοῦς ἔσθ', ὅταν φεύγῃς κακά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλὰ κἀκείνοισι ταῦτ' ἐναντία.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκ ἔστι λῃσταῖς πνεῦμ' ἐναντιούμενον,
ὅταν παρῇ κλέψαι τι χἀρπάσαι βίᾳ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ δοκεῖ, χωρῶμεν, ἔνδοθεν λαβὼν
ὅτου σε χρεία καὶ πόθος μάλιστ' ἔχει.

As soon by prayers shall I be brought again
From death, as was his father,[1] to the light.

SAILOR

That's not for me to say, I must be going
To join my ship. Farewell, and may the gods
Be with you both and order all things well.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou, boy? That he, Laertes' son,
Should think to wheedle me aboard his ship,
And make a show of me to the Greek host!
Is it not monstrous? Sooner would I heed
My mortal foe, the snake that crippled me.
But he—no word, no practice is too vile
For him to stick at. He will come for sure.
Haste thee, my son, and put a many leagues
Of ocean 'twixt Odysseus and our ship.
Bestir ye! Who in season labours best,
His labours ended, has the sweetest rest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

All in good time; soon as the headwind drops
We will weigh anchor; now 'tis in our teeth.

PHILOCTETES

To those who fly from ill all winds are fair.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But this wind's contrary for them no less.

PHILOCTETES

For pirates no wind's adverse, when there's chance
Of pillaging or robbery under arms.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, as thou will'st, we'll sail; but from the cave
Take anything thou needest or dost prize.

[1] Sisyphus, the reputed father of Odysseus, ordered his wife to leave his body unburied and so obtained leave from Pluto to return to earth in order to punish her impiety.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' ἔστιν ὧν δεῖ, καίπερ οὐ πολλῶν ἄπο.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τοῦθ' ὃ μὴ νεώς γε τῆς ἐμῆς ἔπι;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φύλλον τί μοι πάρεστιν, ᾧ μάλιστ' ἀεὶ
κοιμῶ τόδ' ἕλκος, ὥστε πραΰνειν πάνυ. 650

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἔκφερ' αὐτό. τί γὰρ ἔτ' ἄλλ' ἐρᾷς λαβεῖν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἴ μοί τι τόξων τῶνδ' ἀπημελημένον
παρερρύηκεν, ὡς λίπω μή τῳ λαβεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἦ ταῦτα γὰρ τὰ κλεινὰ τόξ' ἃ νῦν ἔχεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ταῦτ', οὐ γὰρ ἄλλ' ἔστ', ἀλλ' ἃ βαστάζω χεροῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἆρ' ἔστιν ὥστε κἀγγύθεν θέαν λαβεῖν
καὶ βαστάσαι με προσκύσαι θ' ὥσπερ θεόν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

σοί γ', ὦ τέκνον, καὶ τοῦτο κἄλλο τῶν ἐμῶν
ὁποῖον ἄν σοι ξυμφέρῃ γενήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καὶ μὴν ἐρῶ γε, τὸν δ' ἔρωθ' οὕτως ἔχω· 660
εἴ μοι θέμις, θέλοιμ' ἄν· εἰ δὲ μή, πάρες.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὅσιά τε φωνεῖς ἔστι τ', ὦ τέκνον, θέμις,
ὅς γ' ἡλίου τόδ' εἰσορᾶν ἐμοὶ φάος
μόνος δέδωκας, ὃς χθόν' Οἰταίαν ἰδεῖν,
ὃς πατέρα πρέσβυν, ὃς φίλους, ὃς τῶν ἐμῶν

PHILOCTETES

My store is scant, but certain things I need.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What that thou wilt not find on board my ship?

PHILOCTETES

A herb of wondrous virtue wherewithal
I use to mollify and lull my wound.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Then bring it with thee. What else wouldst thou take?

PHILOCTETES

Some shafts, that may have dropped by accident,
Lest a chance-comer find them, I would fetch.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Is that then in thy hands the famous bow?

PHILOCTETES

This and none other is the famous bow.

NEOPTOLEMUS

May I have leave to gaze upon it close,
Handle it, aye adore it as a god?

PHILOCTETES

Right willingly, my son, and aught beside
That I can do to profit thee, command.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I have this longing, I confess, but if
My longing seem not lawful, let it be.

PHILOCTETES

A pious scruple; but this privilege,
My son, is thine by right, for thou alone
Hast given me to behold the light of day,
And Oeta, and my aged sire, and friends;
For when I lay beneath my enemies' heel,

ἐχθρῶν μ' ἔνερθεν ὄντ' ἀνέστησας πέρα.
θάρσει, παρέσται ταῦτά σοι καὶ θιγγάνειν
καὶ δόντι δοῦναι κἀξεπεύξασθαι βροτῶν
ἀρετῆς ἕκατι τῶνδ' ἐπιψαῦσαι μόνον·
εὐεργετῶν γὰρ καὐτὸς αὔτ' ἐκτησάμην. 670

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἄχθομαί σ' ἰδών τε καὶ λαβὼν φίλον·
ὅστις γὰρ εὖ δρᾶν εὖ παθὼν ἐπίσταται,
παντὸς γένοιτ' ἂν κτήματος κρείσσων φίλος.
χωροῖς ἂν εἴσω.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ σέ γ' εἰσάξω· τὸ γὰρ
νοσοῦν ποθεῖ σε ξυμπαραστάτην λαβεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

λόγῳ μὲν ἐξήκουσ', ὄπωπα δ' οὐ μάλα, στρ. α'
τὸν πελάταν λέκτρων ποτὲ τῶν Διὸς
κατὰ δρομάδ' ἄμπυκα δέσμιον ὡς ἔβαλεν[1] παγ-
κρατὴς Κρόνου παῖς· 680
ἄλλον δ' οὔτιν' ἔγωγ' οἶδα κλύων οὐδ' ἐσιδὼν μοίρᾳ
τοῦδ' ἐχθίονι συντυχόντα
θνατῶν, ὃς οὔτ' ἔρξας τιν' οὔ τι[2] νοσφίσας,
ἀλλ' ἴσος ὢν ἴσοις ἀνήρ,
ὤλλυθ' ὧδ' ἀναξίως.
τόδε τοι θαῦμά μ' ἔχει,
πῶς ποτε πῶς ποτ' ἀμφιπλάκτων ῥοθίων μόνος
κλύων,
πῶς ἄρα πανδάκρυτον οὕτω βιοτὰν κατέσχεν· 690

ἀντ. α'

ἵν' αὐτὸς ἦν πρόσουρος, οὐκ ἔχων βάσιν,
οὐδέ τιν' ἐγχώρων κακογείτονα,

[1] Ἰξίονα κατ' ἄμπυκα δὴ δρομάδα δέσμιον ὡς ἔλαβ' ὁ MSS., Schneidewin corr. [2] οὔτε MSS., Schneidewin corr.

'Twas thou upliftedst me above their heads,
It shall be thine to handle and return;
Fear not, and thou shalt boast that thou alone
Of mortals, for thy worth, hast handled it.
'Twas for a service done it came to me.[1]

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Tis pleasant to have found and proved a friend;
For him who good for good returns I hold
A friend more precious than unnumbered gold.
Now go within.

PHILOCTETES

That will I, and entreat
Thine escort, for my ailment craves thine aid.

(They enter the cave.)

CHORUS

I saw him not, yet fame affirms the tale (*Str.* 1)
Of one who dared the bed of Zeus assail.
Him to the wheel that never stays its round
Of torture, the great son of Kronos bound.
But, save of him alone,
To me no sadder fate is known
Than of this saddest wight,
Or by report or sight:
Poor innocent who here to death art done!
He robbed or wrongèd none
I marvel how thus desolate, all forlorn,
These long long years of anguish he hath borne,
Hearing the breakers gride the cold grey stones,

(*Ant.* 1)

Himself for neighbour to himself he groans;
Limping with crippled feet,
He treads his weary beat;

[1] For kindling the funeral-pyre of Heracles on Mount Oeta.

παρ' ᾧ στόνον ἀντίτυπον βαρυβρῶτ' ἀποκλαύ-
σειεν αἱματηρόν·
ὃς τὰν θερμοτάταν αἱμάδα κηκιομέναν ἑλκέων
ἐνθήρου ποδὸς ἠπίοισι
φύλλοις κατευνάσειεν, εἴ τις ἐμπέσοι,
φορβάδος ἐκ γαίας ἑλών· 700
εἷρπε γὰρ ἄλλοτ' ἀλλαχᾷ
τότ' ἂν εἰλυόμενος
παῖς ἄτερ ὡς φίλας τιθήνας ὅθεν εὐμάρει' ὑπάρ-
χοι πόρου, ἀνίκ' ἐξανείη δακέθυμος ἄτα·

στρ. β'

οὐ φορβὰν ἱερᾶς γᾶς σπόρον, οὐκ ἄλλων
αἴρων τῶν νεμόμεσθ' ἀνέρες ἀλφησταί,
πλὴν ἐξ ὠκυβόλων εἴ ποτε τόξων 710
πτανοῖς ἰοῖς ἀνύσειε γαστρὶ φορβάν.
ὦ μελέα ψυχά,
ὃς μηδ' οἰνοχύτου πώματος ἥσθη δεκέτει χρόνῳ,
λεύσσων δ' ὅπου γνοίη στατὸν εἰς ὕδωρ,
ἀεὶ προσενώμα.

ἀντ. β'

νῦν δ' ἀνδρῶν ἀγαθῶν παιδὸς ὑπαντήσας
εὐδαίμων ἀνύσει καὶ μέγας ἐκ κείνων· 720
ὅς νιν ποντοπόρῳ δούρατι, πλήθει
πολλῶν μηνῶν, πατρίαν ἄγει πρὸς αὐλὰν
Μαλιάδων νυμφᾶν
Σπερχειοῦ τε παρ' ὄχθας, ἵν' ὁ χάλκασπις ἀνὴρ
θεοῖς
πλάθει πατρὸς[1] θείῳ πυρὶ παμφαής,
Οἴτας ὑπὲρ ὄχθων.

[1] πᾶσι MSS., Jebb corr.

No comrade by
To give him sigh for sigh,
No friend in whose responsive ear to pour
His woes—the anguish of his festering sore;
To quell the burning rage,
The throbs assuage
With simples gathered from the kindly soil;
But 'twixt the spasms he must crawl and moil
To find the herb, a spell to lay the curse,
Like some weak infant parted from its nurse.

Not his to sow the seed (*Str.* 2)
Or on the largesse feed
That boon earth showers on all the sons of men;
Happy, if now and then
The bolt from his unerring bow can wing
Some living thing.
Poor wretch, who ten long years athirst did pine,
Without one draught of soul-refreshing wine,
But sought some stagnant pool
His parchèd throat to cool.

(*Ant.* 2)

Now hath he found a champion good and true,
And by his woes ennobled shall renew
His pristine fame. The tale of months complete,
Home shall he journey with our homing fleet.
There on Spercheios' marge, his ancient home,
The haunt of Malian naiads, he shall roam,
Where the famed hero of the brazen shield,
His full divinity in flames revealed
And in a fiery car ascending high
O'er Oeta was translated to the sky.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἕρπ', εἰ θέλεις. τί δή ποθ' ὧδ' ἐξ οὐδενὸς 730
λόγου σιωπᾷς κἀπόπληκτος ὧδ' ἔχει;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀᾶ, ἀᾶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ'[1] *ἔστιν;*

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδὲν δεινόν· ἀλλ' ἴθ', ὦ τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μῶν ἄλγος ἴσχεις τῆς παρεστώσης νόσου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ δῆτ' ἔγωγ', ἀλλ' ἄρτι κουφίζειν δοκῶ.
ὦ θεοί.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί τοὺς θεοὺς ὧδ' ἀναστένων καλεῖς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

σωτῆρας αὐτοὺς ἠπίους θ' ἡμῖν μολεῖν.
ἀᾶ, ἀᾶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί ποτε πέπονθας; οὐκ ἐρεῖς, ἀλλ' ὧδ' ἔσει 740
σιγηλός; ἐν κακῷ δέ τῳ φαίνει κυρῶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον, κοὐ δυνήσομαι κακὸν
κρύψαι παρ' ὑμῖν, ἀτταταῖ· διέρχεται
διέρχεται. δύστηνος, ὦ τάλας ἐγώ.
ἀπόλωλα, τέκνον· βρύκομαι, τέκνον· παπαῖ,
ἀπαππαπαῖ, παπαππαπαππαπαππαπαῖ.
πρὸς θεῶν, πρόχειρον εἴ τί σοι, τέκνον, πάρα
ξίφος χεροῖν, πάταξον εἰς ἄκρον πόδα·
ἀπάμησον ὡς τάχιστα· μὴ φείσῃ βίου.
ἴθ', ὦ παῖ. 750

[1] Erfurdt added δ'.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Be moving if it please thee . . . Why, what means
This sudden silence, this amazedness?

PHILOCTETES

Ah me! Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is it?

PHILOCTETES

A mere nothing, boy; go on.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou feelest thine old malady again?

PHILOCTETES

No, a mere twinge; I think 'tis passing now—
O God!

NEOPTOLEMUS

Why groan aloud and call on God?

PHILOCTETES

To save me and deliver me. . . . Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS

What ails thee? Wilt not tell me? Wilt not speak?
That something troubles thee is very plain.

PHILOCTETES

My son, I am lost, undone! Impossible
To hide it longer from you; lost, undone!
It stabs me, stabs me through and through and
through.
Ah me! ah me! ah me!
For heaven's sake, if thou hast a sword at hand,
Draw it, my son, strike swiftly, at a stroke
Cut off this foot, no matter if it kill me;
Quick, quick, my son!

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν οὕτω νεοχμὸν ἐξαίφνης, ὅτου
τοσήνδ' ἰυγὴν καὶ στόνον σαυτοῦ ποεῖ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶσθ', ὦ τέκνον;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἶσθ', ὦ παῖ;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί σοί;

οὐκ οἶδα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς οὐκ οἶσθα; παππαπαππαπαῖ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

δεινόν γε τοὐπίσαγμα τοῦ νοσήματος.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

δεινὸν γὰρ οὐδὲ ῥητόν· ἀλλ' οἴκτιρέ με.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δῆτα δράσω;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μή με ταρβήσας προδῷς·
ἥκει γὰρ αὕτη διὰ χρόνου πλάνοις ἴσως
ὡς ἐξεπλήσθη.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἰὼ ἰὼ δύστηνε σύ,
δύστηνε δῆτα διὰ πόνων πάντων φανείς. 760
βούλει λάβωμαι δῆτα καὶ θίγω τί σου;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μὴ δῆτα τοῦτό γ'· ἀλλά μοι τὰ τόξ' ἑλὼν
τάδ', ὥσπερ ᾔτου μ' ἀρτίως, ἕως ἀνῇ

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is this sudden fit
That makes thee moan so and bewail thyself?

PHILOCTETES

Thou knowest, boy.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What is it?

PHILOCTETES

Thou knowest.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nay,
What ails thee?

PHILOCTETES

Knowest thou not? Ah me! Ah me!

NEOPTOLEMUS

The burden of thy pain is terrible.

PHILOCTETES

Yea, terrible, past words. O pity me.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What shall I do?

PHILOCTETES

Fear me not, leave me not:
My ailment loves to play the truant, stray
Awhile, and then come home again, belike
Tired with its holiday.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Alas! poor wretch,
Wretched indeed in all thy suffering proved.
Wilt lean on me? Shall I take hold of thee?

PHILOCTETES

Nay touch me not, I beg, but take this bow
Which thou didst crave to handle, and until

τὸ πῆμα τοῦτο τῆς νόσου τὸ νῦν παρόν,
σῷζ' αὐτὰ καὶ φύλασσε. λαμβάνει γὰρ οὖν
ὕπνος μ', ὅταν περ τὸ κακὸν ἐξίῃ τόδε·
κοὐκ ἔστι λῆξαι πρότερον· ἀλλ' ἐᾶν χρεὼν
ἕκηλον εὕδειν. ἢν δὲ τῷδε τῷ χρόνῳ
μόλωσ' ἐκεῖνοι, πρὸς θεῶν ἐφίεμαι 770
ἑκόντα μηδ' ἄκοντα μηδέ τῳ τέχνῃ
κείνοις μεθεῖναι ταῦτα, μὴ σαυτόν θ' ἅμα
κἄμ', ὄντα σαυτοῦ πρόστροπον, κτείνας γένῃ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει προνοίας οὕνεκ'· οὐ δοθήσεται
πλὴν σοί τε κἀμοί· ξὺν τύχῃ δὲ πρόσφερε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἰδοὺ δέχου, παῖ· τὸν φθόνον δὲ πρόσκυσον
μή σοι γενέσθαι πολύπον' αὐτὰ μηδ' ὅπως
ἐμοί τε καὶ τῷ πρόσθ' ἐμοῦ κεκτημένῳ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ θεοί, γένοιτο ταῦτα νῷν· γένοιτο δὲ
πλοῦς οὔριός τε κεὐσταλὴς ὅποι ποτὲ 780
θεὸς δικαιοῖ χὠ στόλος πορσύνεται.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὖν δέδοικα μὴ ἀτέλεστ' εὐχῇ, τέκνον.[1]
στάζει γὰρ αὖ μοι φοίνιον τόδ' ἐκ βυθοῦ
κηκῖον αἷμα, καί τι προσδοκῶ νέον.
παπαῖ, φεῦ.
παπαῖ μάλ', ὦ πούς, οἷά μ' ἐργάσει κακά.
προσέρπει,
προσέρχεται τόδ' ἐγγύς. οἴμοι μοι τάλας.
ἔχετε τὸ πρᾶγμα· μὴ φύγητε μηδαμῇ.
ἀτταταῖ. 790

[1] ἀλλὰ δέδοικ', ὦ παῖ, μή μ' ἀτελὴς εὐχή MSS. The text is a combination of Triclinius and Jebb.

The spasm that now disables me is gone,
Keep it and guard it well; for when the fit
Passes, a drowsiness comes over me;
And sleep's the only medicine that gives ease.
So let me slumber undisturbed, and if
They come the while, I charge thee, boy, by heaven,
Let them not have it, yield not up the bow,
Willing or nilling, or by force or fraud;
Lest thou should'st prove a double murderer,
And slay thyself and me thy suppliant.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I will be vigilant, fear not; none shall have it
But thou and I alone; so give it to me.
Good luck attend it!

PHILOCTETES

Take it then, my son,
But first propitiate the Jealous God,
Lest it should prove to thee a bane, as erst
To me and to its former lord it proved.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Heaven grant this prayer to both of us, and grant
A fair and prosperous voyage whithersoe'er
Our destined course is set and heaven ordains!

PHILOCTETES

Alas, my son! I fear thy prayers are vain;
For once again upwelling from the wound
The black blood trickles auguring a relapse.
Out, out upon thee, damnèd foot! Alack!
What plague hast yet in store for me? Alack!
It prowls, it stalks amain, ready to spring.
Woe! Now ye know my torture, leave me not!
Ah me! Ah me!

ὦ ξένε Κεφαλλήν, εἴθε σου διαμπερὲς
στέρνων ἔχοιτ' ἄλγησις ἥδε. φεῦ, παπαῖ,
παπαῖ μάλ' αὖθις. ὦ διπλοῖ στρατηλάται,
'Αγάμεμνον, ὦ Μενέλαε, πῶς ἂν ἀντ' ἐμοῦ
τὸν ἴσον χρόνον τρέφοιτε τήνδε τὴν νόσον;
ἰώ μοι.
ὦ Θάνατε Θάνατε, πῶς ἀεὶ καλούμενος
οὕτω κατ' ἦμαρ, οὐ δύνᾳ μολεῖν ποτε;
ὦ τέκνον ὦ γενναῖον, ἀλλὰ συλλαβὼν
τῷ Λημνίῳ τῷδ' ἀνακαλουμένῳ πυρὶ 800
ἔμπρησον, ὦ γενναῖε· κἀγώ τοί ποτε
τὸν τοῦ Διὸς παῖδ' ἀντὶ τῶνδε τῶν ὅπλων,
ἃ νῦν σὺ σῴζεις, τοῦτ' ἐπηξίωσα δρᾶν.
τί φής, παῖ;
τί φής; τί σιγᾷς; ποῦ ποτ' ὤν, τέκνον, κυρεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλγῶ πάλαι δὴ τἀπὶ σοὶ στένων κακά.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ', ὦ τέκνον, καὶ θάρσος ἴσχ'· ὡς ἥδε μοι
ὀξεῖα φοιτᾷ καὶ ταχεῖ' ἀπέρχεται.
ἀλλ' ἀντιάζω, μή με καταλίπῃς μόνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει, μενοῦμεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦ μενεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σαφῶς φρόνει. 810

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ μήν σ' ἔνορκόν γ' ἀξιῶ θέσθαι, τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὡς οὐ θέμις γ' ἐμοὔστι σοῦ μολεῖν ἄτερ.

Would God, O Cepallenian, through thy breast
This spasm might pass and hold thee in its grip!
Woe's me and woe once more! Ye generals twain,
Menelaus, Agamemnon, might this worm
Devour your vitals no less time than mine!
O Death, Death, Death! how is it that invoked
Day after day, thou wilt not heed my call?
Boy, noble boy, of thy nobility
I pray thee take and in those Lemnian flames
Consume me, welcome now to me as when
I dared to do it for the son of Zeus,
And won for meed the bow thy bearest now.
Speak! answer! why thus absent, O my son?

NEOPTOLEMUS

My heart was heavy, musing on thy woes.

PHILOCTETES

Nay, be of better cheer, my son; this pain,
As in its onset sudden, so departs.
Only, I pray thee, leave me not alone.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Take heart; we'll stay.

PHILOCTETES

Thou wilt?

NEOPTOLEMUS

In sooth I will.

PHILOCTETES

It were not meet to bind thee with an oath.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I am bound in honour not to leave thee here.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔμβαλλε χειρὸς πίστιν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐμβάλλω μενεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐκεῖσε νῦν μ', ἐκεῖσε

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποῖ λέγεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἄνω

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί παραφρονεῖς αὖ; τί τὸν ἄνω λεύσσεις κύκλον;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέθες μέθες με.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ποῖ μεθῶ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέθες ποτέ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὔ φημ' ἐάσειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπό μ' ὀλεῖς, ἢν προσθίγῃς.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

καὶ δὴ μεθίημ', εἴ τι[1] δὴ πλέον φρονεῖς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ γαῖα, δέξαι θανάσιμόν μ' ὅπως ἔχω·
τὸ γὰρ κακὸν τόδ' οὐκέτ' ὀρθοῦσθαί μ' ἐᾷ. 820

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τὸν ἄνδρ' ἔοικεν ὕπνος οὐ μακροῦ χρόνου
ἕξειν· κάρα γὰρ ὑπτιάζεται τόδε·
ἱδρώς γέ τοί νιν πᾶν καταστάζει δέμας,

[1] μεθίημι· τί δὴ MSS., Hermann corr.

PHILOCTETES

Thy hand upon it.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Here's my hand in pledge.

PHILOCTETES

Then yonder, let me yonder—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Whither then?

PHILOCTETES

Up higher—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Art thou wandering once again?
Why starest at the firmament on high?

PHILOCTETES

Let me go.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Whither?

PHILOCTETES

Let me go, I say.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thou shalt not.

PHILOCTETES

Touch me not, 'twould be my death.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I release thee. Thou art calmer now.

PHILOCTETES

Take me, O Earth, a dying man, so near
His end with sickness that he cannot stand.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Methinks in no long time he'll be asleep;
For, see, his head sinks backward, and o'er all
His body, look you, trickle beads of sweat,

μέλαινά τ' ἄκρου τις παρέρρωγεν ποδὸς
αἱμορραγὴς φλέψ. ἀλλ' ἐάσωμεν, φίλοι,
ἕκηλον αὐτόν, ὡς ἂν εἰς ὕπνον πέσῃ.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

Ὕπν' ὀδύνας ἀδαής, Ὕπνε δ' ἀλγέων, *στρ.*
εὐαὲς[1] ἡμῖν ἔλθοις,
εὐαίων εὐαίων, ὦναξ·
ὄμμασι δ' ἀντίσχοις 830
τάνδ' αἴγλαν, ἃ τέταται τανῦν.
ἴθι ἴθι μοι παιών.
ὦ τέκνον, ὅρα ποῦ στάσει,
ποῖ δέ μοι τἀνθένδε βάσει,[2]
φροντίδος. ὁρᾷς ἤδη.
πρὸς τί μενοῦμεν πράσσειν;
καιρός τοι πάντων γνώμαν ἴσχων
πολύ τι πολὺ παρὰ πόδα κράτος ἄρνυται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ὅδε μὲν κλύει οὐδέν, ἐγὼ δ' ὁρῶ οὕνεκα θήραν
τήνδ' ἁλίως ἔχομεν τόξων, δίχα τοῦδε πλέοντες. 840
τοῦδε γὰρ ὁ στέφανος, τοῦτον θεὸς εἶπε κομίζειν.
κομπεῖν δ' ἔστ' ἀτελῆ σὺν ψεύδεσιν αἰσχρὸν
ὄνειδος.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀλλά, τέκνον, τάδε μὲν θεὸς ὄψεται· *ἀντ.*
ὧν δ' ἂν ἀμείβῃ μ' αὖθις,
βαιάν μοι, βαιάν, ὦ τέκνον,
πέμπε λόγων φάμαν·

[1] εὐαὴς MSS., Hermann corr.
[2] ποῖ δὲ βάσει, πῶς δέ μοι τἀντεῦθεν MSS., Jebb corr.

And from an artery in his wounded foot
The black blood spurts. So let us leave him, friends
In peace and quiet till he fall asleep.

CHORUS

Sleep immune of cares, (*Str.*)
Sleep that knows not cumber,
Breathe thy softest airs,
Prince of painless slumber!
O'er his eyes alway
Let thy dream-light play;
Healer come, we pray.

My son, bethink thee how
Thou standest, and what next
Thou purposest; not now
The time to halt perplexed.
Why longer here remain?
Ever occasion ta'en
At the full flood brings gain.

NEOPTOLEMUS

We might escape and steal his bow indeed
(He hears us not); but little should we speed
Without the man. Himself he must be brought,
So the God bade; he is the prize we sought;
He crowns our triumph, and 'twere double shame
Falsely a fraud-won victory to claim.

CHORUS

Far things with Heaven lie, (*Ant.*)
Look thou to what is near,
And, when thou mak'st reply,
Low breathe it in my ear:

ὡς πάντων ἐν νόσῳ εὐδρακὴς
ὕπνος ἄϋπνος λεύσσειν.
ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι δύνᾳ μάκιστον
κεῖνο δή μοι κεῖνο λάθρᾳ 850
ἐξιδοῦ ὅπᾳ πράξεις.
οἶσθα γὰρ ἂν[1] αὐδῶμαι,
εἰ ταύταν τούτων γνώμαν ἴσχεις,
μάλα τοι ἄπορα πυκινοῖς ἐνιδεῖν πάθη.

οὖρός τοι, τέκνον, οὖρος·
ἁνὴρ δ᾽ ἀνόμματος οὐδ᾽ ἔχων
ἀρωγὰν ἐκτέταται νύχιος,
(ἀλεὴς ὕπνος ἐσθλός,)
οὐ χερός, οὐ ποδός, οὔ τινος ἄρχων, 860
ἀλλά τις ὡς Ἀΐδᾳ παρακείμενος.
ὅρα, βλέπ᾽ εἰ καίρια
φθέγγει· τὸ δ᾽ ἁλώσιμον
ἐμᾷ φροντίδι, παῖ,
πόνος ὁ μὴ φοβῶν κράτιστος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σιγᾶν κελεύω μηδ᾽ ἀφεστάναι φρενῶν·
κινεῖ γὰρ ἁνὴρ ὄμμα κἀνάγει κάρα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φέγγος ὕπνου διάδοχον τό τ᾽ ἐλπίδων
ἄπιστον οἰκούρημα τῶνδε τῶν ξένων.
οὐ γάρ ποτ᾽, ὦ παῖ, τοῦτ᾽ ἂν ἐξηύχησ᾽ ἐγώ,
τλῆναί σ᾽ ἐλεινῶς ὧδε τἀμὰ πήματα 870
μεῖναι παρόντα καὶ ξυνωφελοῦντά μοι.
οὔκουν Ἀτρεῖδαι τοῦτ᾽ ἔτλησαν εὐφόρως[2]
οὕτως ἐνεγκεῖν, ἀγαθοὶ στρατηλάται.

[1] ὧν or ὃν MSS., Hermann corr.
[2] εὐπόρως MSS., Brunck corr.

Sleepless the sick man's sleep,
    Quick-eared to catch each sound;
His eyes, though closed, yet keep
    Sharp watch around.

Wherefore explore in stealth, my son,
How what thou dost may best be done.
If thy plan be still the same,
What it is I need not name,
Plain to one who looks before
Are his troubles vast and sore.

The breeze sets fair, sets fair, my son,
    And there outstretched he lies
    As one who hath nor ears nor eyes.
(How good to sleep i' the sun!)
Of hand or foot, no motion has he, none
    More than the dead who in Earth's bosom rest.
Then look, my son, look that thou utterest
Sane counsels. If a plain man might advise
Thy wisdom, the discreetest way is best.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Silence, and keep your wits; his eyes begin
To open and he raises now his head.

PHILOCTETES

O sweet to wake to the broad day and find,
What least I hoped, my kindly guardians by.
For this, my son, I never had presumed
To hope, that thou would'st thus compassionately
Wait to attend my woes and minister.
The Atridae, those brave captains never showed
Courage to bear them patiently. But thou

ἀλλ' εὐγενὴς γὰρ ἡ φύσις κἀξ εὐγενῶν,
ὦ τέκνον, ἡ σή, πάντα ταῦτ' ἐν εὐχερεῖ
ἔθου, βοῆς τε καὶ δυσοσμίας γέμων.
καὶ νῦν ἐπειδὴ τοῦδε τοῦ κακοῦ δοκεῖ
λήθη τις εἶναι κἀνάπαυλα δή, τέκνον,
σύ μ' αὐτὸς ἆρον, σύ με κατάστησον, τέκνον,
ἵν', ἡνίκ' ἂν κόπος μ' ἀπαλλάξῃ ποτέ, 880
ὁρμώμεθ' ἐς ναῦν μηδ' ἐπίσχωμεν τὸ πλεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἥδομαι μέν σ' εἰσιδὼν παρ' ἐλπίδα
ἀνώδυνον βλέποντα κἀμπνέοντ' ἔτι·
ὡς οὐκέτ' ὄντος γὰρ τὰ συμβόλαιά σου
πρὸς τὰς παρούσας ξυμφορὰς ἐφαίνετο.
νῦν δ' αἶρε σαυτόν· εἰ δέ σοι μᾶλλον φίλον,
οἴσουσί σ' οἵδε· τοῦ πόνου γὰρ οὐκ ὄκνος,
ἐπείπερ οὕτω σοί τ' ἔδοξ' ἐμοί τε δρᾶν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αἰνῶ τάδ', ὦ παῖ, καί μ' ἔπαιρ', ὥσπερ νοεῖς·
τούτους δ' ἔασον, μὴ βαρυνθῶσιν κακῇ 890
ὀσμῇ πρὸ τοῦ δέοντος· οὑπὶ νηὶ γὰρ
ἅλις πόνος τούτοισι συνναίειν ἐμοί.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἔσται τάδ'· ἀλλ' ἵστω τε καὐτὸς ἀντέχου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

θάρσει· τό τοι σύνηθες ὀρθώσει μ' ἔθος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

παπαῖ· τί δῆτ' ἂν δρῷμ' ἐγὼ τοὐνθένδε γε;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί δ' ἔστιν, ὦ παῖ; ποῖ ποτ' ἐξέβης λόγῳ;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ οἶδ' ὅποι χρὴ τἄπορον τρέπειν ἔπος.

By nature noble as by birth, my son,
Mad'st light of all the sores to eye and ear,
And nostrils, that my malady inflicts.
But now at last, 'twould seem, a lull has come,
A respite and oblivion of my ills;
Raise me thyself, boy, set me on my feet,
That, when the attack has wholly spent itself,
We may aboard and instantly set sail.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Right glad am I to see thee breathing still,
Alive, beyond all hope, and freed from pain;
For to appearance thou didst bear the seal
And signature of death. Now raise thyself,
Or if thou choosest, these shall carry thee;
Such service will they readily perform,
Since thou and I alike are thus resolved.

PHILOCTETES

I thank thee, son, and, if it pleaseth thee,
Raise me thyself and spare thy men this task,
Lest they be sickened with my fetidness
Before the time; they'll have enough to bear
With me for messmate when we are aboard.

NEOPTOLEMUS

So be it; now, stand up, lay hold of me.

PHILOCTETES

Fear not, long use and wont has taught me how.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Ye Gods! What now remains for me to do?

PHILOCTETES

What is it, my son, what mean these whirling words?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I speak perplextly, know not how to speak.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπορεῖς δὲ τοῦ σύ; μὴ λέγ', ὦ τέκνον, τάδε.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐνθάδ' ἤδη τοῦδε τοῦ πάθους κυρῶ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐ δή σε δυσχέρεια τοῦ νοσήματος 900
ἔπεισεν ὥστε μή μ' ἄγειν ναύτην ἔτι;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἅπαντα δυσχέρεια, τὴν αὑτοῦ φύσιν
ὅταν λιπών τις δρᾷ τὰ μὴ προσεικότα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδὲν ἔξω τοῦ φυτεύσαντος σύ γε
δρᾷς οὐδὲ φωνεῖς, ἐσθλὸν ἄνδρ' ἐπωφελῶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αἰσχρὸς φανοῦμαι· τοῦτ' ἀνιῶμαι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὔκουν ἐν οἷς γε δρᾷς· ἐν οἷς δ' αὐδᾷς ὀκνῶ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ Ζεῦ, τί δράσω; δεύτερον ληφθῶ κακός,
κρύπτων θ' ἃ μὴ δεῖ καὶ λέγων αἴσχιστ' ἐπῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀνὴρ ὅδ', εἰ μὴ 'γὼ κακὸς γνώμων ἔφυν, 910
προδούς μ' ἔοικε κἀκλιπὼν τὸν πλοῦν στελεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

λιπὼν μὲν οὐκ ἔγωγε· λυπηρῶς δὲ μὴ
πέμπω σε μᾶλλον, τοῦτ' ἀνιῶμαι πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τί ποτε λέγεις, ὦ τέκνον; ὡς οὐ μανθάνω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐδέν σε κρύψω· δεῖ γὰρ ἐς Τροίαν σε πλεῖν
πρὸς τοὺς Ἀχαιοὺς καὶ τὸν Ἀτρειδῶν στόλον.

PHILOCTETES
What can perplex thee? say not so, my son.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Too deep involved, I cannot otherwise.

PHILOCTETES
What! the offensiveness of my complaint
Will stay thee now from taking me aboard?

NEOPTOLEMUS
All is offensive when a man is false
To his true self and, knowing right, does wrong.

PHILOCTETES
But thou dost naught in word or deed to shame
Thy birth in succouring a worthy man.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I shall be proved a rogue; this tortures me.

PHILOCTETES
Not in thy deeds—thy words do give me pause.

NEOPTOLEMUS
God help me now! Must I appear twice base,
Hide what I should not and my shame reveal?

PHILOCTETES
The youth, if I misjudge him not, intends
To play me false and leave me stranded here.

NEOPTOLEMUS
Leave thee? Not so, but what will irk thee more,
Convey thee hence. 'Tis this that tortures me.

PHILOCTETES
Thy words are dark, I cannot catch their drift.

NEOPTOLEMUS
I will be plain and round with thee. To Troy
Thou sailest, to the Atridae and the host.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι, τί εἶπας;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μὴ στέναζε, πρὶν μάθῃς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ποῖον μάθημα; τί με νοεῖς δρᾶσαί ποτε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σῶσαι κακοῦ μὲν πρῶτα τοῦδ', ἔπειτα δὲ
ξὺν σοὶ τὰ Τροίας πεδία πορθῆσαι μολών. 920

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτ' ἀληθῆ δρᾶν νοεῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πολλὴ κρατεῖ
τούτων ἀνάγκη, καὶ σὺ μὴ θυμοῦ κλύων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπόλωλα τλήμων, προδέδομαι. τί μ', ὦ ξένε,
δέδρακας; ἀπόδος ὡς τάχος τὰ τόξα μοι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐχ οἷόν τε· τῶν γὰρ ἐν τέλει κλύειν
τό τ' ἔνδικόν με καὶ τὸ συμφέρον ποεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ πῦρ σὺ καὶ πᾶν δεῖμα καὶ πανουργίας
δεινῆς τέχνημ' ἔχθιστον, οἷά μ' εἰργάσω,
οἷ' ἠπάτηκας· οὐδ' ἐπαισχύνει μ' ὁρῶν
τὸν προστρόπαιον, τὸν ἱκέτην, ὦ σχέτλιε; 930
ἀπεστέρηκας τὸν βίον τὰ τόξ' ἑλών.
ἀπόδος, ἱκνοῦμαί σ', ἀπόδος, ἱκετεύω, τέκνον·
πρὸς θεῶν πατρῴων, τὸν βίον με μὴ ἀφέλῃ.[1]

[1] μή μ' ἀφέλῃς MSS., Elmsley corr.

PHILOCTETES

Alas! What say'st thou?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Murmur not but hear me—

PHILOCTETES

Hear me, quoth he! what wilt thou do with me?

NEOPTOLEMUS

First from this misery rescue thee, and then,
With thee to aid me, ravage Ilium.

PHILOCTETES

Wilt thou indeed do this?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Necessity
Leaves me no choice; so take it not amiss.

PHILOCTETES

Me miserable! I am undone, betrayed
How hast thou used me, sir! I charge thee straight
Give back my bow!

NEOPTOLEMUS

That cannot be, for I
By policy and duty both am bound
To obey my chiefs.

PHILOCTETES

Thou fire, thou utter monster,
Abhorrèd masterpiece of knavery,
How hast thou served me, cheated me, abused?
Art not ashamed to look on me, thou wretch,
Thy suppliant, thy bedesman? Robbing me
Of this my bow thou robbest me of life.
Restore it, I beseech thee, O my son,
Oh, an thou lov'st me, give me back my bow;
Rob me not, by thy gods I pray, of life!

ὤμοι τάλας. ἀλλ' οὐδὲ προσφωνεῖ μ' ἔτι,
ἀλλ' ὡς μεθήσων μήποθ', ὧδ' ὁρᾷ πάλιν.
ὦ λιμένες, ὦ προβλῆτες, ὦ ξυνουσίαι
θηρῶν ὀρείων, ὦ καταρρῶγες πέτραι,
ὑμῖν τάδ', οὐ γὰρ ἄλλον οἶδ' ὅτῳ λέγω,
ἀνακλαίομαι παροῦσι τοῖς εἰωθόσιν,
οἷ' ἔργ' ὁ παῖς μ' ἔδρασεν οὐξ 'Αχιλλέως· 940
ὀμόσας ἀπάξειν οἴκαδ', ἐς Τροίαν μ' ἄγει·
προσθείς τε χεῖρα δεξιάν, τὰ τόξα μου
ἱερὰ λαβὼν τοῦ Ζηνὸς 'Ηρακλέους ἔχει,
καὶ τοῖσιν 'Αργείοισι φήνασθαι θέλει·
ὡς ἄνδρ' ἑλὼν ἰσχυρόν ἐκ βίας μ' ἄγει,
κοὐκ οἶδ' ἐναίρων νεκρὸν ἢ καπνοῦ σκιάν,
εἴδωλον ἄλλως· οὐ γὰρ ἂν σθένοντά γε
εἷλέν μ'· ἐπεὶ οὐδ' ἂν ὧδ' ἔχοντ', εἰ μὴ δόλῳ.
νῦν δ' ἠπάτημαι δύσμορος. τί χρή με δρᾶν;
ἀλλ' ἀπόδος, ἀλλὰ νῦν ἔτ' ἐν σαυτῷ γενοῦ. 950
τί φής; σιωπᾷς; οὐδέν εἰμ' ὁ δύσμορος.
ὦ σχῆμα πέτρας δίπυλον, αὖθις αὖ πάλιν
εἴσειμι πρὸς σὲ ψιλός, οὐκ ἔχων τροφήν·
ἀλλ' αὐανοῦμαι τῷδ' ἐν αὐλίῳ μόνος,
οὐ πτηνὸν ὄρνιν οὐδὲ θῆρ' ὀρειβάτην
τόξοις ἐναίρων τοισίδ', ἀλλ' αὐτὸς τάλας
θανὼν παρέξω δαῖθ' ὑφ' ὧν ἐφερβόμην,
καί μ' οὓς ἐθήρων πρόσθε θηράσουσι νῦν·
φόνον φόνου δὲ ῥύσιον τίσω τάλας
πρὸς τοῦ δοκοῦντος οὐδὲν εἰδέναι κακόν. 960
ὄλοιο—μή πω, πρὶν μάθοιμ' εἰ καὶ πάλιν
γνώμην μετοίσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, θάνοις κακῶς.

Ah me! he turns away, he will not speak;
His silence says he will not give it back.
  Ye creeks, ye promontories, dens and lairs
Of mountain beasts, ye cliffs precipitous,
To you—none else will heed me—I appeal,
On you, familiars of my woes, I call;
Hear what I suffer from Achilles' son!
He swore to bring me home again, and now
To Troy he takes me; on his plighted troth
I gave, he keeps my bow, the sacred bow
That erst to Zeus-born Heracles belonged,
To flout it 'fore the Argive host as his;
He takes me hence his prisoner, as if
His arm had captured some great warrior,
And sees not he is slaying a dead man,
A shade, a wraith, an unsubstantial ghost;
For in my strength he had not ta'en me, no,
Nor as I am, disabled, save by guile.
But now, entrapped, ah whither shall I turn?
  Have pity, give me, give me back my bow!
Be once again thy true self, even now.
What answer? None. O woe is me, I am lost!
O cave with double mouth, to thee I turn;
Stripped of my arms and lacking means of life,
Here shall I wither in this lonely cell.
No bird of air, no beast of the upland wold
Yon bow shall slay, but dying I shall make
A feast for those who fed me when alive,
A quarry for the creatures I pursued,
My blood for their blood shed. And this I owe
To one who seemed a child in innocence.
My curse upon thee—nay I will forbear,
Till first I hear whether thou wilt repent
Or not; if no, die blasted by my curse!

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί δρῶμεν; ἐν σοὶ καὶ τὸ πλεῖν ἡμᾶς, ἄναξ,
ἤδη 'στὶ καὶ τοῖς τοῦδε προσχωρεῖν λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐμοὶ μὲν οἶκτος δεινὸς ἐμπέπτωκέ τις
τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς οὐ νῦν πρῶτον, ἀλλὰ καὶ πάλαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐλέησον, ὦ παῖ, πρὸς θεῶν, καὶ μὴ παρῇς
σαυτοῦ βροτοῖς ὄνειδος, ἐκκλέψας ἐμέ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οἴμοι, τί δράσω; μή ποτ' ὤφελον λιπεῖν
τὴν Σκῦρον· οὕτω τοῖς παροῦσιν ἄχθομαι. 970

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐκ εἶ κακὸς σύ, πρὸς κακῶν δ' ἀνδρῶν μαθὼν
ἔοικας ἥκειν αἰσχρά· νῦν δ' ἄλλοισι δοὺς
οἷς εἰκὸς ἔκπλει, τἀμά μοι μεθεὶς ὅπλα.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δρῶμεν, ἄνδρες;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ὦ κάκιστ' ἀνδρῶν, τί δρᾷς;
οὐκ εἶ μεθεὶς τὰ τόξα ταῦτ' ἐμοὶ πάλιν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι, τίς ἀνήρ; ἆρ' Ὀδυσσέως κλύω;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ὀδυσσέως, σάφ' ἴσθ', ἐμοῦ γ', ὃν εἰσορᾷς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι· πέπραμαι κἀπόλωλ'· ὅδ' ἦν ἄρα
ὁ ξυλλαβών με κἀπονοσφίσας ὅπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγώ, σάφ' ἴσθ', οὐκ ἄλλος· ὁμολογῶ τάδε. 980

CHORUS
What shall we do, prince? 'tis for thee to say
Whether we sail or hearken to his prayer.

NEOPTOLEMUS
My heart is strangely wrought, and from the first
I have been moved with pity for the man.

PHILOCTETES
In heaven's name show mercy, let not men
Brand thee as my betrayer, O my son!

NEOPTOLEMUS
What shall I do? Would I had never left
Scyros, to fall into this desperate plight.

PHILOCTETES
Thou art not base, but coming here wast schooled
To play the rogue by villains; leave that part
To others framed by nature to be rogues.
Sail hence, but ere thou sail give back my arms.

NEOPTOLEMUS
What shall we do, friends?

ODYSSEUS *appears suddenly from behind the cave.*

ODYSSEUS
Wretch, what art thou at?
Back with thee, sirrah! give the bow to me—

PHILOCTETES
Ah who is here? Is that Odysseus' voice?

ODYSSEUS
Odysseus, as thou seeest. Here am I.

PHILOCTETES
Oh I am sold, betrayed. So it was he
Who trapped me and bereft me of my arms.

ODYSSEUS
I and no other. I avow 'twas I.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπόδος, ἄφες μοι, παῖ, τὰ τόξα.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

τοῦτο μέν,
οὐδ' ἢν θέλῃ, δράσει ποτ'· ἀλλὰ καὶ σὲ δεῖ
στείχειν ἅμ' αὐτοῖς, ἢ βίᾳ στελοῦσί σε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔμ', ὦ κακῶν κάκιστε καὶ τολμήστατε,
οἵδ' ἐκ βίας ἄξουσιν;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἢν μὴ ἕρπῃς ἑκών.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ Λημνία χθὼν καὶ τὸ παγκρατὲς σέλας
Ἡφαιστότευκτον, ταῦτα δῆτ' ἀνασχετά,
εἴ μ' οὗτος ἐκ τῶν σῶν ἀπάξεται βίᾳ;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

Ζεύς ἐσθ', ἵν' εἰδῇς, Ζεύς, ὁ τῆσδε γῆς κρατῶν, 990
Ζεύς, ᾧ δέδοκται ταῦθ'· ὑπηρετῶ δ' ἐγώ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ μῖσος, οἷα κἀξανευρίσκεις λέγειν·
θεοὺς προτείνων τοὺς θεοὺς ψευδεῖς τίθης.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὔκ, ἀλλ' ἀληθεῖς· ἡ δ' ὁδὸς πορευτέα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὔ φημ'.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ δέ φημι. πειστέον τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι τάλας. ἡμᾶς μὲν ὡς δούλους σαφῶς
πατὴρ ἄρ' ἐξέφυσεν οὐδ' ἐλευθέρους.

PHILOCTETES
(*To* CHORUS)

Ye also, friends, will ye abandon me
And show no pity for my sad estate?

CHORUS

This stripling is our captain, and whate'er
He says, we say the same; his word is law.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I know I shall be twitted by my chief
As weak and tender-hearted; but what odds?
If our friend wills it, tarry here until
Our crew have made all tight and yare, and we
Have offered prayers, as fitting. He the while
Perchance may come to a better mind and melt.
So we will hasten forward, he and I,
And ye, make haste to follow when we call.

[*Exeunt* ODYSSEUS and NEOPTOLEMUS.

PHILOCTETES

O cavern'd rock, my cell (*Str.* 1)
Now hot, now icy chill,
How long with thee it was my lot to dwell:
To thee till death I shall be constant still.
Tell me, sad lodging, haunted by my pain,
How shall I day by day my life sustain?
Ye timorous doves whose flight
Whirrs in the air o'erhead,
Now where ye will unharmed alight;
No shafts of mine henceforward need ye dread.

CHORUS.

'Tis thou hast willed it thus, infatuate,
Thou art the author of thy sad estate;

ἄλλοθεν ἔχει τύχα τᾶδ' ἀπὸ μείζονος,
εὖτέ γε παρὸν φρονῆσαι
τοῦ λῴονος δαίμονος εἵλου τὸ κάκιον αἰνεῖν.[1] 1100

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὢ τλάμων τλάμων ἄρ' ἐγὼ ἀντ. α'
καὶ μόχθῳ λωβατός, ὃς ἤδη μετ' οὐδενὸς ὕστερον
ἀνδρῶν εἰσοπίσω τάλας ναίων ἐνθάδ' ὀλοῦμαι,
αἰαῖ αἰαῖ,
οὐ φορβὰν ἔτι προσφέρων,
οὐ πτανῶν ἀπ' ἐμῶν ὅπλων
κραταιαῖς μετὰ χερσὶν 1110
ἴσχων· ἀλλά μοι ἄσκοπα
κρυπτά τ' ἔπη δολερᾶς ὑπέδυ φρενός·
ἰδοίμαν δέ νιν,
τὸν τάδε μησάμενον, τὸν ἴσον χρόνον
ἐμὰς λαχόντ' ἀνίας.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πότμος, πότμος σε δαιμόνων τάδ',
οὐδὲ σέ γε δόλος,
ἔσχεν ὑπὸ χειρὸς ἀμᾶς.[2] στυγερὰν ἔχε
δύσποτμον ἀρὰν ἐπ' ἄλλοις. 1120
καὶ γὰρ ἐμοὶ τοῦτο μέλει, μὴ φιλότητ' ἀπώσῃ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οἴμοι μοι, καί που πολιᾶς στρ. β'
πόντου θινὸς ἐφήμενος
ἐγγελᾷ, χερὶ πάλλων
τὰν ἐμὰν μελέου τροφάν,
τὰν οὐδείς ποτ' ἐβάστασεν.
ὦ τόξον φίλον, ὦ φίλων
χειρῶν ἐκβεβιασμένον,

[1] ἑλεῖν MSS., Hermann corr.
[2] ἔσχ' ὑπὸ χειρὸς ἐμᾶς MSS., Bergk corr.

Nor to some higher force canst thou assign
Thy woes, but, when free choice was thine,
  The good thou did'st reject,
  The worse elect.

PHILOCTETES

Ah wretched, wretched then am I, (*Ant.* 1)
Consumed with utter misery,
Doomed for all time to linger on.
Without one friend, one comrade, one,
  To aid me till I die.
  No more my arrows fleet
  Shall win my daily meat;
Poor unsuspecting fool,
A base intriguer's tool,
By his forged legend caught!
Wretch who my ruin wrought,
Would I might see him pine
Long years like me in agony like mine!

CHORUS

By destiny, by destiny 'twas sent.
To treachery my hand was never lent;
Point not at me thy baleful curse, for fain
Thy friend, as heretofore, I would remain.

PHILOCTETES

Ah me! he's sitting now (*Str.* 2)
  Upon the grey sea sands,
And laughs at me, I trow;
  My bow is in his hands,
The bow that was my life, the bow
That never lord save me did know.

My bow, my matchless bow of yew,
  If thou canst feel, how must thou grieve,

ἤ που ἐλεινὸν ὁρᾷς, φρένας εἴ τινας   113
ἔχεις, τὸν Ἡράκλειον
ἄρθμιον ὧδέ σοι
οὐκέτι χρησόμενον τὸ μεθύστερον,
ἄλλου δ' ἐν μεταλλαγᾷ
πολυμηχάνου ἀνδρὸς ἐρέσσει,
ὁρῶν μὲν αἰσχρὰς ἀπάτας, στυγνὸν δὲ φῶτ' ἐχθοδοπόν,
μυρί', ἀπ' αἰσχρῶν ἀνατέλλονθ', ὃς ἐφ' ἡμῖν κάκ' ἐμήσατ', ὦ Ζεῦ.[1]

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἀνδρός τοι τὰ μὲν ἔνδικ' αἰὲν[2] εἰπεῖν,   1140
εἰπόντος δὲ μὴ φθονερὰν
ἐξῶσαι γλώσσας ὀδύναν.
κεῖνος δ' εἷς ἀπὸ πολλῶν
ταχθεὶς τῶνδ' ἐφημοσύνᾳ
κοινὰν ἤνυσεν ἐς φίλους ἀρωγάν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ πταναὶ θῆραι χαροπῶν τ'   ἀντ. β'
ἔθνη θηρῶν, οὓς ὅδ' ἔχει
χῶρος οὐρεσιβώτας,
μηκέτ' ἀπ' αὐλίων φύγᾳ
πηδᾶτ'·[3] οὐ γὰρ ἔχω χεροῖν   1150
τὰν πρόσθεν βελέων ἀλκάν,
ὦ δύστανος ἐγὼ τανῦν,
ἀλλ' ἀνέδην, ὁ δὲ χῶρος ἄρ' οὐκέτι
φοβητὸς οὐκέθ' ὑμῖν,[4]
ἕρπετε· νῦν καλὸν
ἀντίφονον κορέσαι στόμα πρὸς χάριν

[1] Ὀδυσσεύς MSS., Dindorf corr.
[2] τὸ μὲν εὖ δίκαιον MSS., Arndt corr.
[3] φυγᾷ μ' οὐκέτ' ἀπ' αὐλίων | πελᾶτ' MSS., Jebb corr.
[4] ὅδε χῶρος ἐρύκεται | οὐκέτι φοβητὸς ὑμῖν MSS., Jebb corr.

Thus wrested from thy master true,
    Constrained his loving hands to leave,
Thy master who, through Hellas famed,
The friend of Heracles was named.

Now art thou handled by a knave,
    Past master in each cunning art,
Must do his bidding, as a slave,
    In all his misdeeds take thy part.
And aid the unrelenting foe,
The source and spring of all my woe.

CHORUS

A man should aye his rightful cause maintain,
But from malign and venomous taunts refrain ;
And he but serves the common interest,
Speaks for the host, obeying their behest.

PHILOCTETES

Ye feathered tribes, my prey, (*Ant.* 2)
    Ye bright-eyed beasts who roam
The hills, start not away
    Scared from the hunter's home.
Stray where ye will, secure, unharmed ;
Why shun a helpless man unarmed ?

Gone is the mighty bow ;
    Flock hither without dread,
Why should ye fear a foe
    So weak, so ill bestead.
Draw near your gluttonous mouths to fill,
Mangle my carrion flesh at will.

ἐμᾶς σαρκὸς αἰόλας·
ἀπὸ γὰρ βίου αὐτίκα λείψω.
πόθεν γὰρ ἔσται βιοτά; τίς ὧδ' ἐν αὔραις τρέφεται, 1160
μηκέτι μηδενὸς κρατύνων ὅσα πέμπει βιόδωρος
αἶα;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

πρὸς θεῶν, εἴ τι σέβει ξένον, πέλασσον,
εὐνοίᾳ πάσᾳ πελάταν·
ἀλλὰ γνῶθ', εὖ γνῶθ' ἐπὶ σοὶ [1]
κῆρα τάνδ' ἀποφεύγειν.
οἰκτρὰ γὰρ βόσκειν, ἀδαὴς δ'
ἔχειν μυρίον ἄχθος, ὃ ξυνοικεῖ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πάλιν πάλιν παλαιὸν ἄλγημ' ὑπέμνασας, ὦ 1170
λῷστε τῶν πρὶν ἐντόπων.
τί μ' ὤλεσας; τί μ' εἴργασαι;

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί τοῦτ' ἔλεξας;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἰ σὺ τὰν ἐμοὶ στυγερὰν
Τρῳάδα γᾶν μ' ἤλπισας ἄξειν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τόδε γὰρ νοῶ κράτιστον.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀπό νύν με λείπετ' ἤδη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

φίλα μοι, φίλα ταῦτα παρήγγειλας ἑκόντι τε
πράσσειν.
ἴωμεν ἴωμεν
ναὸς ἵν' ἡμῖν τέτακται. 1180

[1] ὅτι σοι MSS., Seyffert corr.

Here shall I waste away,
Soon will ye eye me dead;
Who can survive one day
By airs of heaven fed?
Of all that Earth affords each son,
Herb, root and fruit, possessing none.

CHORUS

If thou regardest a well-wishing friend,
Draw near and to his kindly rule attend.
Think well; from this intolerable bane,
That thou dost feed, and aggravate thy pain,
With thee it rests deliverance to gain.

PHILOCTETES

O why recall my ancient grief once more,
Kindest of all who e'er have touched this shore?
Why twice undo a wretch undone before?

CHORUS

What meanest thou?

PHILOCTETES

I mean that thou wast fain
To take me to the Troy I hate again.

CHORUS

'Tis for thy good.

PHILOCTETES

O leave me then, begone!

CHORUS

Thanks for that word. We will be off anon,
Back to the ship, and each man to his oar.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μή, πρὸς ἀραίου Διός, ἔλθῃς, ἱκετεύω.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

μετρίαζ᾽.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ ξένοι,
μείνατε, πρὸς θεῶν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί θροεῖς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

αἰαῖ αἰαῖ, δαίμων δαίμων·
ἀπόλωλ᾽ ὁ τάλας·
ὦ πούς πούς, τί σ᾽ ἔτ᾽ ἐν βίῳ
τεύξω τῷ μετόπιν τάλας;
ὦ ξένοι, ἔλθετ᾽ ἐπήλυδες αὖθις. 1190

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί ῥέξοντες ἀλλοκότῳ
γνώμᾳ τῶν πάρος, ὧν προὔφαινες;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὔτοι νεμεσητόν,
ἀλύοντα χειμερίῳ
λύπᾳ καὶ παρὰ νοῦν θροεῖν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

βᾶθί νυν, ὦ τάλαν, ὥς σε κελεύομεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδέποτ᾽ οὐδέποτ᾽, ἴσθι τόδ᾽ ἔμπεδον,
οὐδ᾽ εἰ πυρφόρος ἀστεροπητὴς
βροντᾶς αὐγαῖς μ᾽ εἶσι φλογίζων.
ἐρρέτω Ἴλιον οἵ θ᾽ ὑπ᾽ ἐκείνῳ 1200
πάντες ὅσοι τόδ᾽ ἔτλασαν ἐμοῦ ποδὸς ἄρθρον
ἀπῶσαι.
ἀλλ᾽, ὦ ξένοι, ἕν γέ μοι εὖχος ὀρέξατε.

PHILOCTETES

O leave me not, for God's sake, I implore.

CHORUS

Calm thyself.

PHILOCTETES

Stay, O stay!

CHORUS

Why should we wait?

PHILOCTETES

O woe is me! Out on my fate, my fate!
Accursed foot, what shall I make of thee?
I am undone! O friends, come back to me.

CHORUS

What would'st thou? First thou bid'st us go, and then
In the same breath thou biddest us remain.

PHILOCTETES

O be not wrath if one distraught with pain
Blurts out discordant words beside the mark.

CHORUS

Come then, unhappy man, with us embark.

PHILOCTETES

Never, no never, though the King of Heaven
Should threat to blast me with his fiery leven.
No, perish rather Ilium, perish all
The Achaean host that batter at its wall;
Hard hearts who cast me forth as halt and maim
From you, my friends, one parting boon I claim.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ποῖον ἐρεῖς τόδ' ἔπος;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ξίφος, εἴ ποθεν,
ἢ γένυν ἢ βελέων τι προπέμψατε.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ὡς τίνα δὴ ῥέξῃς παλάμαν ποτέ;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

χρῶτ' [1] *ἀπὸ πάντα καὶ ἄρθρα τέμω χερί·*
φονᾷ φονᾷ νόος ἤδη.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

τί ποτε;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πατέρα ματεύων.

ΧΟΡΟΣ 121

ποῖ γᾶς;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐς Ἅιδου·
οὐ γάρ ἐστ' ἐν φάει γ' ἔτι.
ὦ πόλις, ὦ πατρία,
πῶς ἂν εἰσίδοιμ' ἄθλιός σ' ἀνήρ,
ὅς γε σὰν λιπὼν ἱερὰν
λιβάδ' ἐχθροῖς ἔβαν Δαναοῖς
ἀρωγός· ἔτ' οὐδέν εἰμι.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

ἐγὼ μὲν ἤδη καὶ πάλαι νεὼς ὁμοῦ
στείχων ἂν ἦ σοι τῆς ἐμῆς, εἰ μὴ πέλας
Ὀδυσσέα στείχοντα τόν τ' Ἀχιλλέως
γόνον πρὸς ἡμᾶς δεῦρ' ἰόντ' ἐλεύσσομεν. 12

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὐκ ἂν φράσειας ἥντιν' αὖ παλίντροπος
κέλευθον ἕρπεις ὧδε σὺν σπουδῇ ταχύς;

[1] κρᾶτ' MSS., Hermann corr.

CHORUS

What would'st thou ask ?

PHILOCTETES

An axe, a spear, a brand,
No matter what—the weapon first to hand.

CHORUS

Wherefore ! What deed of violence wouldst thou do?

PHILOCTETES

Hack, mangle, limb by limb my body hew ;
My thoughts are bloody.

CHORUS

Wherefore ?

PHILOCTETES

I would go
To seek my father.

CHORUS

In what land ?

PHILOCTETES

Below ;
For I shall find him nowhere on this earth.
My native land, fair land that gave me birth,
Might I but see thee ! Wherefore did I roam
And leave the sacred stream that guards my home ?
To help the Greeks those stormy seas I crossed,
My mortal foes, by them undone, lost, lost !

CHORUS

I should have left thee long ago and now
Be near my ship, but that I saw Odysseus
Advancing towards us and Achilles' son.

Enter NEOPTOLEMUS *followed by* ODYSSEUS.

ODYSSEUS

Wilt thou not tell me why thou hurriest back
In such hot haste and on what errand bound ?

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
λύσων ὅσ᾽ ἐξήμαρτον ἐν τῷ πρὶν χρόνῳ.
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
δεινόν γε φωνεῖς· ἡ δ᾽ ἁμαρτία τίς ἦν;
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἣν σοὶ πιθόμενος τῷ τε σύμπαντι στρατῷ
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἔπραξας ἔργον ποῖον ὧν οὔ σοι πρέπον;
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
ἀπάταισιν αἰσχραῖς ἄνδρα καὶ δόλοις ἑλών.
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
τὸν ποῖον; ὤμοι· μῶν τι βουλεύει νέον;
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
νέον μὲν οὐδέν, τῷ δὲ Ποίαντος τόκῳ, 1230
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
τί χρῆμα δράσεις; ὥς μ᾽ ὑπῆλθέ τις φόβος.
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
παρ᾽ οὗπερ ἔλαβον τάδε τὰ τόξ᾽, αὖθις πάλιν
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέξεις; οὔ τί που δοῦναι νοεῖς;
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
αἰσχρῶς γὰρ αὐτὰ κοὐ δίκῃ λαβὼν ἔχω.
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
πρὸς θεῶν, πότερα δὴ κερτομῶν λέγεις τάδε;
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
εἰ κερτόμησίς ἐστι τἀληθῆ λέγειν.
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
τί φής, Ἀχιλλέως παῖ; τίν᾽ εἴρηκας λόγον;
ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ
δὶς ταὐτὰ βούλει καὶ τρὶς ἀναπολεῖν μ᾽ ἔπη;
ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ
ἀρχὴν κλύειν ἂν οὐδ᾽ ἅπαξ ἐβουλόμην.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I come to expiate all former wrongs.

ODYSSEUS

A strange reply. What wrong did'st thou commit?

NEOPTOLEMUS

When in obedience to the host and thee—

ODYSSEUS

Prithee, what did'st thou that beseemed thee not?

NEOPTOLEMUS

I snared a man by base deceit and guile.

ODYSSEUS

What man? Thou hast not something rash in hand?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Naught rash, but to the son of Poeas I—

ODYSSEUS

What wilt thou do? My soul forbodes some ill.

NEOPTOLEMUS

From whom I took the bow, to him again—

ODYSSEUS

Great Zeus! What meanest thou? Not give it back?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Yes, for I got it basely, shamefully.

ODYSSEUS

In Heaven's name, say'st thou this to mock at me?

NEOPTOLEMUS

If it be mockery to speak the truth.

ODYSSEUS

What now? What meanest thou, Achilles' son?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Must I repeat the same words twice and thrice?

ODYSSEUS

Far better had I never heard them once.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εὖ νῦν ἐπίστω πάντ' ἀκηκοὼς λόγον. 1240

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἔστιν τις, ἔστιν ὅς σε κωλύσει τὸ δρᾶν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί φής; τίς ἔσται μ' οὑπικωλύσων τάδε;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ξύμπας Ἀχαιῶν λαός, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἐγώ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοφὸς πεφυκὼς οὐδὲν ἐξαυδᾷς σοφόν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σὺ δ' οὔτε φωνεῖς οὔτε δρασείεις σοφά.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' εἰ δίκαια, τῶν σοφῶν κρείσσω τάδε.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καὶ πῶς δίκαιον, ἅ γ' ἔλαβες βουλαῖς ἐμαῖς,
πάλιν μεθεῖναι ταῦτα;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τὴν ἁμαρτίαν
αἰσχρὰν ἁμαρτὼν ἀναλαβεῖν πειράσομαι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

στρατὸν δ' Ἀχαιῶν οὐ φοβεῖ, πράσσων τάδε; 1250

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ τὸν σὸν οὐ ταρβῶ φόβον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

[ξὺν τῷ δικαίῳ χεὶρ ἐμή σ' ἀναγκάσει.][1]

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὐδέ τοι σῇ χειρὶ πείθομαι τὸ δρᾶν.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

οὔ τἄρα Τρωσίν, ἀλλὰ σοὶ μαχούμεθα.

[1] Hermann pointed out that a verse is here missing. The line in the text (one of Jebb's suggestions) with the same beginning would explain the omission.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Rest well assured I have nothing more to add.

ODYSSEUS

There is, I tell thee, one to stay thy hand.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Who prithee? who to stay me or prevent?

ODYSSEUS

The whole Achaean host, and I for one.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thy words lack wisdom though thou lack'st not wits.

ODYSSEUS

Unwisdom marks thy words and actions both.

NEOPTOLEMUS

If just, 'tis better than unjust and wise.

ODYSSEUS

Can it be justice to give back the prize
Won by my policy?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Shameful was my fault,
And I will try to make amends for it.

ODYSSEUS

Hast thou no terror of the Achaean host?

NEOPTOLEMUS

A bugbear this with justice on my side.

ODYSSEUS

[Justice must yield if I resort to force.]

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not even thou canst force me 'gainst my will.

ODYSSEUS

Then not with Trojans must we war, but thee.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἴτω[1] τὸ μέλλον.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

χεῖρα δεξιὰν ὁρᾷς
κώπης ἐπιψαύουσαν;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλὰ κἀμέ τοι
ταὐτὸν τόδ' ὄψει δρῶντα κοὐ μέλλοντ' ἔτι.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

καίτοι σ' ἐάσω· τῷ δὲ σύμπαντι στρατῷ
λέξω τάδ' ἐλθών, ὅς σε τιμωρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἐσωφρόνησας· κἂν τὰ λοίφ' οὕτω φρονῇς, 1260
ἴσως ἂν ἐκτὸς κλαυμάτων ἔχοις πόδα.
σὺ δ', ὦ Ποίαντος παῖ, Φιλοκτήτην λέγω,
ἔξελθ', ἀμείψας τάσδε πετρήρεις στέγας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τίς αὖ παρ' ἄντροις θόρυβος ἵσταται βοῆς;
τί μ' ἐκκαλεῖσθε; τοῦ κεχρημένοι, ξένοι;
ὤμοι· κακὸν τὸ χρῆμα. μῶν τί μοι νέα
πάρεστε πρὸς κακοῖσι πέμποντες κακά;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

θάρσει· λόγους δ' ἄκουσον οὓς ἥκω φέρων.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

δέδοικ' ἔγωγε· καὶ τὰ πρὶν γὰρ ἐκ λόγων
καλῶν κακῶς ἔπραξα, σοῖς πεισθεὶς λόγοις. 1270

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὔκουν ἔνεστι καὶ μεταγνῶναι πάλιν;

[1] ἴστω MSS., Wecklein corr.

NEOPTOLEMUS

So be it, if it must be.

ODYSSEUS

See'st my hand
Upon my sword-hilt?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Me too shalt thou see
Ready to follow suit and keen to draw.

ODYSSEUS

Well, I will leave thee, but I shall report
To the whole army. They shall punish thee.

NEOPTOLEMUS

A wise discretion. Keep this prudent mind,
So mayest thou henceforth with a whole skin live.

[*Exit* ODYSSEUS

Ho! Philoctetes, son of Poeas, leave
The shelter of thy rocky home; come forth!

PHILOCTETES

What means this hubbub at my cave again?
Why summon me, what would ye with me, Sirs?

(*Appears at mouth of cave and sees* NEOPTOLEMUS.)

Ha! I mislike the look of it. Are ye come
As heralds of new woes to crown the old?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Take heart and listen to the news I bring.

PHILOCTETES

I am afraid. Thou camest once before;
I trusted thy fair words and ill I sped.

NEOPTOLEMUS

May not a man repent him?

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τοιοῦτος ἦσθα τοῖς λόγοισι χὤτε μου
τὰ τόξ' ἔκλεπτες, πιστός, ἀτηρὸς λάθρᾳ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὔ τι μὴν νῦν· βούλομαι δέ σου κλύειν,
πότερα δέδοκταί σοι μένοντι καρτερεῖν
ἢ πλεῖν μεθ' ἡμῶν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

παῦε, μὴ λέξῃς πέρα·
μάτην γὰρ ἂν εἴπῃς γε πάντ' εἰρήσεται.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὕτω δέδοκται;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ πέρα γ' ἴσθ' ἢ λέγω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἤθελον μὲν ἄν σε πεισθῆναι λόγοις
ἐμοῖσιν· εἰ δὲ μή τι πρὸς καιρὸν λέγων
κυρῶ, πέπαυμαι.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πάντα γὰρ φράσεις μάτην. 1280
οὐ γάρ ποτ' εὔνουν τὴν ἐμὴν κτήσει φρένα,
ὅστις γ' ἐμοῦ δόλοισι τὸν βίον λαβὼν
ἀπεστέρηκας, κᾆτα νουθετεῖς ἐμὲ
ἐλθών, ἀρίστου πατρὸς αἴσχιστος γεγώς.
ὄλοισθ', Ἀτρεῖδαι μὲν μάλιστ', ἔπειτα δὲ
ὁ Λαρτίου παῖς καὶ σύ.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

μὴ 'πεύξῃ πέρα·
δέχου δὲ χειρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς βέλη τάδε.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς εἶπας; ἆρα δεύτερον δολούμεθα;

PHILOCTETES

Such thou wast,
No less fair-spoken, when thou wert about
To steal my bow, black treachery in thy heart.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But now another man, who fain would learn
Whether thou still persistest to stay here,
Or wilt embark with us.

PHILOCTETES

Stop, say no more!
All that thou sayest will be wasted breath.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Art resolute?

PHILOCTETES

More resolute than words can tell.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Well, I would gladly have persuaded thee
By argument, but if thou wilt not heed,
Why, I have done.

PHILOCTETES

Thou needs must speak in vain.
How canst thou win me o'er to friendliness,
Thou who didst rob me of my life by fraud,
And then dost come to counsel me? Base son
Of noblest sire! Perdition on you all;
The Atridae first, Odysseus then, and thee!

NEOPTOLEMUS

Forbear thy curses. Take from me thy bow.

PHILOCTETES

What say'st thou? Am I tricked a second time?

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀπώμοσ' ἁγνὸν Ζηνὸς ὑψίστου σέβας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φίλτατ' εἰπών, εἰ λέγεις ἐτήτυμα. 12

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τοὔργον παρέσται φανερόν· ἀλλὰ δεξιὰν
πρότεινε χεῖρα, καὶ κράτει τῶν σῶν ὅπλων.

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

ἐγὼ δ' ἀπαυδῶ γ', ὦ θεοὶ ξυνίστορες,
ὑπέρ τ' Ἀτρειδῶν τοῦ τε σύμπαντος στρατοῦ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

τέκνον, τίνος φώνημα, μῶν Ὀδυσσέως,
ἐπῃσθόμην;

ΟΔΥΣΣΕΥΣ

σάφ' ἴσθι· καὶ πέλας γ' ὁρᾷς,
ὅς σ' ἐς τὰ Τροίας πεδί' ἀποστελῶ βίᾳ,
ἐάν τ' Ἀχιλλέως παῖς ἐάν τε μὴ θέλῃ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὔ τι χαίρων, ἢν τόδ' ὀρθωθῇ βέλος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἆ, μηδαμῶς, μή, πρὸς θεῶν, μεθῇς βέλος. 1300

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μέθες με, πρὸς θεῶν, χεῖρα, φίλτατον τέκνον.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὐκ ἂν μεθείην.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φεῦ· τί μ' ἄνδρα πολέμιον
ἐχθρόν τ' ἀφείλου μὴ κτανεῖν τόξοις ἐμοῖς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' οὔτ' ἐμοὶ τοῦτ' ἐστὶν οὔτε σοὶ καλόν.

NEOPTOLEMUS

No, by the name of Zeus most high, I swear it.

PHILOCTETES

O comfortable words, if they be true.

NEOPTOLEMUS

The deed shall follow to attest this truth
Reach hither thy right hand and take thy bow.

(*As he is handing the bow to* PHILOCTETES, ODYSSEUS *appears.*)

ODYSSEUS

Hold! I protest 'fore Heaven, and in the name
Of the Atridae and the host forbid it.

PHILOCTETES

Who spake, my son, was that Odysseus' voice
I heard?

ODYSSEUS

None other; and he's hard at hand,
Ready to take thee back to Troy by force,
Whether it please Achilles' son or no.

PHILOCTETES

But at thy peril, if this shaft fly straight.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Hold, hold! in heaven's name let not fly thy shaft!

PHILOCTETES

Let go my hand in heaven's name, dearest son!

NEOPTOLEMUS

I will not.

PHILOCTETES

Why, O why didst thou prevent me
From slaying with my bow the man I hate?

NEOPTOLEMUS

That were dishonourable for thee and me.

[*Exit* ODYSSEUS.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἀλλ' οὖν τοσοῦτόν γ' ἴσθι, τοὺς πρώτους στρατοῦ,
τοὺς τῶν Ἀχαιῶν ψευδοκήρυκας, κακοὺς
ὄντας πρὸς αἰχμήν, ἐν δὲ τοῖς λόγοις θρασεῖς.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εἶεν· τὰ μὲν δὴ τόξ' ἔχεις, κοὐκ ἔσθ' ὅτου
ὀργὴν ἔχοις ἂν οὐδὲ μέμψιν εἰς ἐμέ.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ξύμφημι· τὴν φύσιν δ' ἔδειξας, ὦ τέκνον, 131[0]
ἐξ ἧς ἔβλαστες, οὐχὶ Σισύφου πατρός,
ἀλλ' ἐξ Ἀχιλλέως, ὃς μετὰ ζώντων ὅτ' ἦν
ἤκου' ἄριστα, νῦν δὲ τῶν τεθνηκότων.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἥσθην πατέρα τὸν ἀμὸν εὐλογοῦντά σε
αὐτόν τ' ἔμ'· ὧν δέ σου τυχεῖν ἐφίεμαι,
ἄκουσον. ἀνθρώποισι τὰς μὲν ἐκ θεῶν
τύχας δοθείσας ἔστ' ἀναγκαῖον φέρειν·
ὅσοι δ' ἑκουσίοισιν ἔγκεινται βλάβαις,
ὥσπερ σύ, τούτοις οὔτε συγγνώμην ἔχειν
δίκαιόν ἐστιν οὔτ' ἐποικτίρειν τινά. 132[0]
σὺ δ' ἠγρίωσαι, κοὔτε σύμβουλον δέχει,
ἐάν τε νουθετῇ τις εὐνοίᾳ λέγων,
στυγεῖς, πολέμιον δυσμενῆ θ' ἡγούμενος.
ὅμως δὲ λέξω· Ζῆνα δ' ὅρκιον καλῶ·
καὶ ταῦτ' ἐπίστω καὶ γράφου φρενῶν ἔσω.
σὺ γὰρ νοσεῖς τόδ' ἄλγος ἐκ θείας τύχης,
Χρύσης πελασθεὶς φύλακος, ὃς τὸν ἀκαλυφῆ
σηκὸν φυλάσσει κρύφιος οἰκουρῶν ὄφις·
καὶ παῦλαν ἴσθι τῆσδε μή ποτ' ἂν τυχεῖν
νόσου βαρείας, ἕως ἂν αὑτὸς ἥλιος 133[0]
ταύτῃ μὲν αἴρῃ, τῇδε δ' αὖ δύνῃ πάλιν,
πρὶν ἂν τὰ Τροίας πεδί' ἑκὼν αὐτὸς μόλῃς,

PHILOCTETES

Well of one thing thou may'st be sure, the chiefs,
Those lying heralds of the Achaean host,
Are brave in words and cowards in the fight.

NEOPTOLEMUS

So be it. The bow is thine again, and now
Thou hast no grief or quarrel against me.

PHILOCTETES

None, my brave boy, for thou hast proved this day
Thy race and lineage, not of Sisyphus,
But of Achilles, noblest once of men
In life, and now the noblest of the dead.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Sweet to my ears the praises of my sire,
And of myself; but now I crave of thee
A boon. What fates the gods allot to men
They needs must bear, but whoso hug their griefs,
As thou dost,—who can pity or condone
Such self-tormentors? Thou, inexorable,
Wilt tolerate no counsel, deemest him
Who would admonish thee in love a foe;
Yet will I speak the truth, so help me Zeus!
Write on the table of thy memory
These words: thy sore plague is a heaven-sent doom;
With foot profane, in Chrysè's roofless shrine,
Thou didst insult her tutelary snake.
For this sin wast thou stricken, and no relief
Canst win from thy affliction, whilst the sun
Shall run from East to West his daily course,
Before of thy free will thou com'st to Troy.

καὶ τοῖν παρ' ἡμῖν ἐντυχὼν 'Ασκληπίδαιν
νόσου μαλαχθῇς τῆσδε, καὶ τὰ πέργαμα
ξὺν τοῖσδε τόξοις ξύν τ' ἐμοὶ πέρσας φανῇς.
ὡς δ' οἶδα ταῦτα τῇδ' ἔχοντ' ἐγὼ φράσω.
ἀνὴρ γὰρ ἡμῖν ἐστιν ἐκ Τροίας ἁλούς,
Ἕλενος ἀριστόμαντις, ὃς λέγει σαφῶς
ὡς δεῖ γενέσθαι ταῦτα· καὶ πρὸς τοῖσδ' ἔτι
ὡς ἔστ' ἀνάγκη τοῦ παρεστῶτος θέρους 1340
Τροίαν ἁλῶναι πᾶσαν· ἢ δίδωσ' ἑκὼν
κτείνειν ἑαυτόν, ἢν τάδε ψευσθῇ λέγων.
ταῦτ' οὖν ἐπεὶ κάτοισθα, συγχώρει θέλων.
καλὴ γὰρ ἡ 'πίκτησις, Ἑλλήνων ἕνα
κριθέντ' ἄριστον τοῦτο μὲν παιωνίας
ἐς χεῖρας ἐλθεῖν, εἶτα τὴν πολύστονον
Τροίαν ἑλόντα κλέος ὑπέρτατον λαβεῖν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ στυγνὸς αἰών, τί με, τί δῆτ' ἔχεις ἄνω
βλέποντα κοὐκ ἀφῆκας εἰς Ἅιδου μολεῖν;
οἴμοι, τί δράσω; πῶς ἀπιστήσω λόγοις 1350
τοῖς τοῦδ', ὃς εὔνους ὢν ἐμοὶ παρῄνεσεν;
ἀλλ' εἰκάθω δῆτ'; εἶτα πῶς ὁ δύσμορος
εἰς φῶς τάδ' ἔρξας εἶμι; τῷ προσήγορος;
πῶς, ὦ τὰ πάντ' ἰδόντες ἀμφ' ἐμοὶ κύκλοι,
ταῦτ' ἐξανασχήσεσθε, τοῖσιν 'Ατρέως
ἐμὲ ξυνόντα παισίν, οἵ μ' ἀπώλεσαν;
πῶς τῷ πανώλει παιδὶ τῷ Λαερτίου;
οὐ γάρ με τἄλγος τῶν παρελθόντων δάκνει,
ἀλλ' οἷα χρὴ παθεῖν με πρὸς τούτων ἔτι
δοκῶ προλεύσσειν· οἷς γὰρ ἡ γνώμη κακῶν
μήτηρ γένηται, τἄλλα παιδεύει κακούς. 1360
καὶ σοῦ δ' ἔγωγε θαυμάσας ἔχω τόδε.
χρῆν γάρ σε μήτ' αὐτόν ποτ' ἐς Τροίαν μολεῖν

There shalt thou find our famed Asclepidae,
And healed by them, with thy bow's aid and mine,
Shalt take and sack the towers of Ilium.
Thou askest how I know all this. Attend:
We have a Trojan prisoner, Helenus,
Chiefest of seers, who plainly prophesied
All I have told thee, and revealed besides
That, ere this summer passes, Troy must fall;
His life the forfeit if his word proved false.
Now that thou know'st this, yield with a good grace.
How fair a vision—to be singled out
As bravest of the host, and, first made whole
By healing hands, as conqueror of Troy,
Woe-wearied city, win undying fame!

PHILOCTETES

O hateful life that keep'st me lingering on
In this vile world and wilt not let me join
The world of shades! Ah me! What can I do?
How turn a deaf ear to the kindly words
Of one who counsels well and seeks my good?
Shall I then yield? How, having yielded, face
The public gaze? Will not all turn from me?
Ye eyes, so long the witness of my wrongs,
How will ye brook to see me once again
Consorting with my torturers, the sons
Of Atreus and Odysseus, the arch-fiend?
'Tis not resentment for the past that stings,
But a prevision of the ills to come;
For when a mind is warped it takes the ply,
And evil-doers will be evil still.
Thee too, my son, I marvel much at thee;
Never should'st thou have gone thyself to Troy,

ἡμᾶς τ' ἀπείργειν, οἵ γέ σου καθύβρισαν,
πατρὸς γέρας συλῶντες, εἶτα τοῖσδε σὺ
εἶ ξυμμαχήσων,[1] κἄμ' ἀναγκάζεις τόδε;
μὴ δῆτα, τέκνον· ἀλλ' ἅ μοι ξυνώμοσας,
πέμψον πρὸς οἴκους· καὐτὸς ἐν Σκύρῳ μένων
ἔα κακῶς αὐτοὺς ἀπόλλυσθαι κακούς.
χοὔτω διπλῆν μὲν ἐξ ἐμοῦ κτήσει χάριν, 137
διπλῆν δὲ πατρός, κοὐ κακοὺς ἐπωφελῶν
δόξεις ὅμοιος τοῖς κακοῖς πεφυκέναι.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

λέγεις μὲν εἰκότ', ἀλλ' ὅμως σε βούλομαι
θεοῖς τε πιστεύσαντα τοῖς τ' ἐμοῖς λόγοις
φίλου μετ' ἀνδρὸς τοῦδε τῆσδ' ἐκπλεῖν χθονός.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἦ πρὸς τὰ Τροίας πεδία καὶ τὸν Ἀτρέως
ἔχθιστον υἱὸν τῷδε δυστήνῳ ποδί;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πρὸς τοὺς μὲν οὖν σε τήνδε τ' ἔμπυον βάσιν
παύσοντας ἄλγους κἀποσώσοντας νόσου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ δεινὸν αἶνον αἰνέσας, τί φῄς ποτε; 138

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἃ σοί τε κἀμοὶ λῷσθ' ὁρῶ τελούμενα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

καὶ ταῦτα λέξας οὐ καταισχύνει θεούς;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς γάρ τις αἰσχύνοιτ' ἂν ὠφελῶν φίλους;[2]

[1] l. 1365: [οἳ τὸν ἄθλιον
Αἴανθ' ὅπλων σοῦ πατρὸς ὕστερον δίκῃ
Ὀδυσσέως ἔκριναν.]
These lines, clearly an interpolation, have been omitted.
[2] ὠφελούμενος MSS., Buttman corr.

Nor sought to bring me thither. How could'st thou,
When they had robbed thee of thy father's meed
And flouted thee?[1] How can'st thou after that
Fight at their side thyself, or bid me fight?
Not so, my son, but do as thou hast sworn,
Convey me home; thyself in Scyros bide;
Leave those ill-doers to their evil doom.
Thus shalt thou win a double thanks from me
And from my sire; nor will men say of thee:
Abetting base men he himself is base.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Thy words are reasonable; natheless I
Would have thee trust my promise and the god's,
And confidently sail with me, thy friend.

PHILOCTETES

What! to the plains of Troy, to him I loathe,
The son of Atreus, with this cursèd foot?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Nay, but to kind physicians who will treat
Thy ulcered limb and heal thee of thy hurt.

PHILOCTETES

O wondrous weird! What means this mystery?

NEOPTOLEMUS

One fraught with happy issue for us both.

PHILOCTETES

Hast thou no fear of heaven, thus to speak?

NEOPTOLEMUS

Why should a man feel fear who helps his friends?

[1] The omitted lines are:
Who judged Odysseus of thy father's arms
More worthy than the hapless Ajax.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

λέγεις δ' Ἀτρείδαις ὄφελος ἢ 'π' ἐμοὶ τόδε;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

σοί που, φίλος γ' ὤν, χὠ λόγος τοιόσδε μου.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

πῶς, ὅς γε τοῖς ἐχθροῖσί μ' ἐκδοῦναι θέλεις;

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ὦ τᾶν, διδάσκου μὴ θρασύνεσθαι κακοῖς.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὀλεῖς με, γιγνώσκω σε, τοῖσδε τοῖς λόγοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

οὔκουν ἔγωγε· φημὶ δ' οὔ σε μανθάνειν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ οὐκ Ἀτρείδας ἐκβαλόντας οἶδά με; 139

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀλλ' ἐκβαλόντες εἰ πάλιν σώσουσ' ὅρα.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

οὐδέποθ' ἑκόντα γ' ὥστε τὴν Τροίαν ἰδεῖν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί δῆτ' ἂν ἡμεῖς δρῷμεν, εἰ σέ γ' ἐν λόγοις
πείσειν δυνησόμεσθα μηδὲν ὧν λέγω;
ὡς ῥᾷστ' ἐμοὶ μὲν τῶν λόγων λῆξαι, σὲ δὲ
ζῆν, ὥσπερ ἤδη ζῇς, ἄνευ σωτηρίας.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἔα με πάσχειν ταῦθ' ἅπερ παθεῖν με δεῖ·
ἃ δ' ᾔνεσάς μοι δεξιᾶς ἐμῆς θιγών,
πέμπειν πρὸς οἴκους, ταῦτά μοι πρᾶξον, τέκνον,
καὶ μὴ βράδυνε μηδ' ἐπιμνησθῇς ἔτι 14[illegible]
Τροίας· ἅλις γάρ μοι τεθρήνηται γόοις.

PHILOCTETES

Help for the sons of Atreus, or for me?

NEOPTOLEMUS

For thee, as these my words attest, thy friend.

PHILOCTETES

A friend, when thou would'st hand me to my foes?

NEOPTOLEMUS

O let not suffering make thee truculent.

PHILOCTETES

I know thou would'st undo me pleading thus.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Not I, but thou thyself, who wilt not learn.

PHILOCTETES

Do I not know the Atridae cast me forth?

NEOPTOLEMUS

'Tis true, but now they would deliver thee.

PHILOCTETES

Not with my will, if first I must to Troy.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What must I do, if all persuasion fails
To make thee budge an inch? 'Twere easier
To cease from words and leave thee here to live,
As thou hast lived, a hopeless castaway.

PHILOCTETES

Well, let me dree my weird; but thou, my son,
Perform the promise made with clasp of hands,
Take me straight home, and talk no more of Troy.
My cup of lamentations I have drained.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

εἰ δοκεῖ, στείχωμεν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ γενναῖον εἰρηκὼς ἔπος.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

ἀντέρειδε νῦν βάσιν σήν.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἰς ὅσον γ' ἐγὼ σθένω.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

αἰτίαν δὲ πῶς Ἀχαιῶν φεύξομαι;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

μὴ φροντίσῃς.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τί γάρ, ἐὰν πορθῶσι χώραν τὴν ἐμήν;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ἐγὼ παρὼν

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

τίνα προσωφέλησιν ἔρξεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

βέλεσι τοῖς Ἡρακλέους

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

πῶς λέγεις;

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

εἴρξω πελάζειν.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

στεῖχε προσκύσας χθόνα.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μήπω γε, πρὶν ἂν τῶν ἡμετέρων
αἴῃς μύθων, παῖ Ποίαντος·
φάσκειν δ' αὐδὴν τὴν Ἡρακλέους 141

NEOPTOLEMUS

As thou wilt then ; let us forward.

PHILOCTETES

Nobly spoken, let us go.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Forward ! plant thy footsteps firmly.

PHILOCTETES

To my utmost will I so.

NEOPTOLEMUS

But the wrath of the Achaeans will pursue me.

PHILOCTETES

Never care.

NEOPTOLEMUS

What if they lay waste my borders ?

PHILOCTETES

Never fear, I shall be there—

NEOPTOLEMUS

What assistance canst thou render ?

PHILOCTETES

Heracles, his mighty bow—

NEOPTOLEMUS

Say'st thou ?

PHILOCTETES

Will prevent their landing.

NEOPTOLEMUS

Kiss the earth and let us go.

Apparition of HERACLES *behind the stage.*

HERACLES

Go not yet till thou hast heard,
Son of Poeas, first my word :
Heracles to thee appears,

ἀκοῇ τε κλύειν λεύσσειν τ' ὄψιν.
τὴν σὴν δ' ἥκω χάριν οὐρανίας
ἕδρας προλιπών,
τὰ Διός τε φράσων βουλεύματά σοι
κατερητύσων θ' ὁδὸν ἣν στέλλει·
σὺ δ' ἐμῶν μύθων ἐπάκουσον.

καὶ πρῶτα μέν σοι τὰς ἐμὰς λέξω τύχας,
ὅσους πονήσας καὶ διεξελθὼν πόνους
ἀθάνατον ἀρετὴν ἔσχον, ὡς πάρεσθ' ὁρᾶν. 142
καὶ σοί, σάφ' ἴσθι, τοῦτ' ὀφείλεται παθεῖν,
ἐκ τῶν πόνων τῶνδ' εὐκλεᾶ θέσθαι βίον.
ἐλθὼν δὲ σὺν τῷδ' ἀνδρὶ πρὸς τὸ Τρωικὸν
πόλισμα, πρῶτον μὲν νόσου παύσει λυγρᾶς,
ἀρετῇ τε πρῶτος ἐκκριθεὶς στρατεύματος,
Πάριν μέν, ὃς τῶνδ' αἴτιος κακῶν ἔφυ,
τόξοισι τοῖς ἐμοῖσι νοσφιεῖς βίου,
πέρσεις τε Τροίαν, σκῦλά τ' εἰς μέλαθρα σὰ
πέμψεις, ἀριστεῖ' ἐκλαβὼν στρατεύματος,
Ποίαντι πατρὶ πρὸς πάτρας Οἴτης πλάκα. 143
ἃ δ' ἂν λάβῃς σὺ σκῦλα τοῦδε τοῦ στρατοῦ,
τόξων ἐμῶν μνημεῖα πρὸς πυρὰν ἐμὴν
κόμιζε. καὶ σοὶ ταῦτ', Ἀχιλλέως τέκνον,
παρῄνεσ'· οὔτε γὰρ σὺ τοῦδ' ἄτερ σθένεις
ἑλεῖν τὸ Τροίας πεδίον οὔθ' οὗτος σέθεν.
ἀλλ' ὡς λέοντε συννόμω φυλάσσετον
οὗτος σὲ καὶ σὺ τόνδ'· ἐγὼ δ' Ἀσκληπιὸν
παυστῆρα πέμψω σῆς νόσου πρὸς Ἴλιον.
τὸ δεύτερον γὰρ τοῖς ἐμοῖς αὐτὴν χρεὼν

His the voice that thrills thine ears.
'Tis for thy sake I have come,
Leaving my Olympian home.
Mandate from high Zeus I bring
To forbid thy journeying:
Hear the will of heaven's King.

But first I'll mind thee of my own career,
How, having laboured hugely and endured,
I won immortal glory, as thou seest.
Know that thy fortune like to mine shall be,
Through suffering to glorify thy life.
Go with yon man to Ilium. There first
Thou shalt be healèd of thy grievous sore;
Then, chosen as the champion of the host,
With these my arrows thou shalt pierce to the heart
Paris, the guilty cause of all that woe.
Troy shalt thou sack, and, winning from the host
The meed of bravest, carry home rich spoils
To glad old Poeas and the Oetaean halls.
But of the spoils, whate'er the host assigns thee,
Bring to my pyre, as tribute to my bow,
A tithe.
I have a message too for thee,
Son of Achilles. Thou without his aid
Can'st not take Troy, nor he apart from thine;
But like two lions together on the prowl,
Either the other guards.
To cure thy wounds
Asclepius, the healer, will I send
To Troas; for a second time Troy towers

τόξοις ἁλῶναι. τοῦτο δ' ἐννοεῖθ', ὅταν
πορθῆτε γαῖαν, εὐσεβεῖν τὰ πρὸς θεούς·
ὡς τἄλλα πάντα δεύτερ' ἡγεῖται πατὴρ
Ζεύς· οὐ γὰρ εὐσέβεια συνθνῄσκει βροτοῖς·
κἂν ζῶσι κἂν θάνωσιν, οὐκ ἀπόλλυται.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

ὦ φθέγμα ποθεινὸν ἐμοὶ πέμψας
χρόνιός τε φανείς,
οὐκ ἀπιθήσω τοῖς σοῖς μύθοις.

ΝΕΟΠΤΟΛΕΜΟΣ

κἀγὼ γνώμην ταύτῃ τίθεμαι.

ΗΡΑΚΛΗΣ

μή νυν χρόνιοι μέλλετε πράσσειν·
καιρὸς καὶ πλοῦς
ὅδ' ἐπείγει γὰρ κατὰ πρύμνην.

ΦΙΛΟΚΤΗΤΗΣ

φέρε νυν στείχων χώραν καλέσω.
χαῖρ', ὦ μέλαθρον ξύμφρουρον ἐμοί,
νύμφαι τ' ἔνυδροι λειμωνιάδες,
καὶ κτύπος ἄρσην πόντου προβολῆς,[1]
οὗ πολλάκι δὴ τοὐμὸν ἐτέγχθη
κρᾶτ' ἐνδόμυχον πληγαῖσι νότου,
πολλὰ δὲ φωνῆς τῆς ἡμετέρας
Ἑρμαῖον ὄρος παρέπεμψεν ἐμοὶ
στόνον ἀντίτυπον χειμαζομένῳ.
νῦν δ', ὦ κρῆναι Λύκιόν τε ποτόν,
λείπομεν ὑμᾶς, λείπομεν ἤδη
δόξης οὔ ποτε τῆσδ' ἐπιβάντες.

[1] προβλῆς MSS., Hermann corr.

Must fall before my shafts. Only take heed,
In laying waste the land to reverence
Its gods; all else by Zeus my sire is less
Regarded. Piety can never die;
It lives on earth and blossoms in the grave.

PHILOCTETES

Voice for which I long have yearned,
Form, long visioned, now discerned!
Thee I cannot disobey.

NEOPTOLEMUS

I too obey.

HERACLES

Then to work! No time to spare;
Seize the hour; the wind sets fair.

PHILOCTETES

Yet ere I part I fain would bid farewell.
Home of my vigils, rocky cell,
Nymphs of the streams and grass-fringed shore,
Caves where the deep-voiced breakers roar,
When through the cavern's open mouth,
Borne on the wings of the wild South,
E'en to my dwelling's inmost lair,
The rain and spray oft drenched my hair;
And oft responsive to my groan
Mount Hermaeum made his moan;
O Lycian fount, O limpid well,
I thought with you all time to dwell;
And now I take my last farewell.

χαῖρ', ὦ Λήμνου πέδον ἀμφίαλον,
καί μ' εὐπλοίᾳ πέμψον ἀμέμπτως,
ἔνθ' ἡ μεγάλη Μοῖρα κομίζει
γνώμη τε φίλων χὠ πανδαμάτωρ
δαίμων, ὃς ταῦτ' ἐπέκρανεν.

ΧΟΡΟΣ

χωρῶμεν δὴ πάντες ἀολλεῖς,
νύμφαις ἁλίαισιν ἐπευξάμενοι 1470
νόστου σωτῆρας ἱκέσθαι.

Sea-girt Lemnos, hear my prayer,
Bid thy guest a voyage fair
Speed him to the land where he,
Borne by mighty Destiny,
And the god at whose decree
All was ordered, fain would be.

CHORUS

Let us to the Sea Nymphs pray
To waft us on our Troy-ward way.
Mariners, attend my call;
Let us voyage, one and all.

END OF VOL. II.